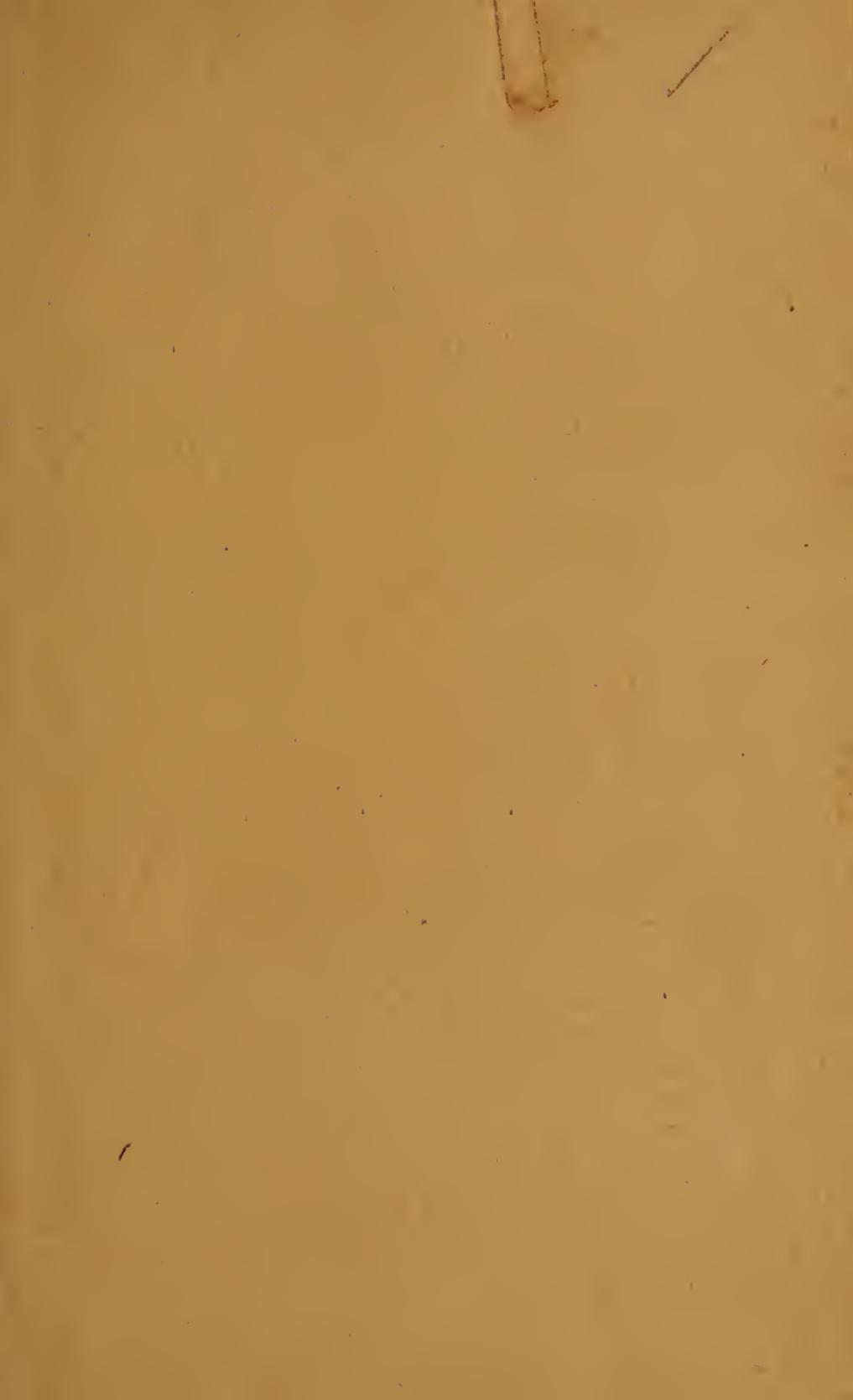
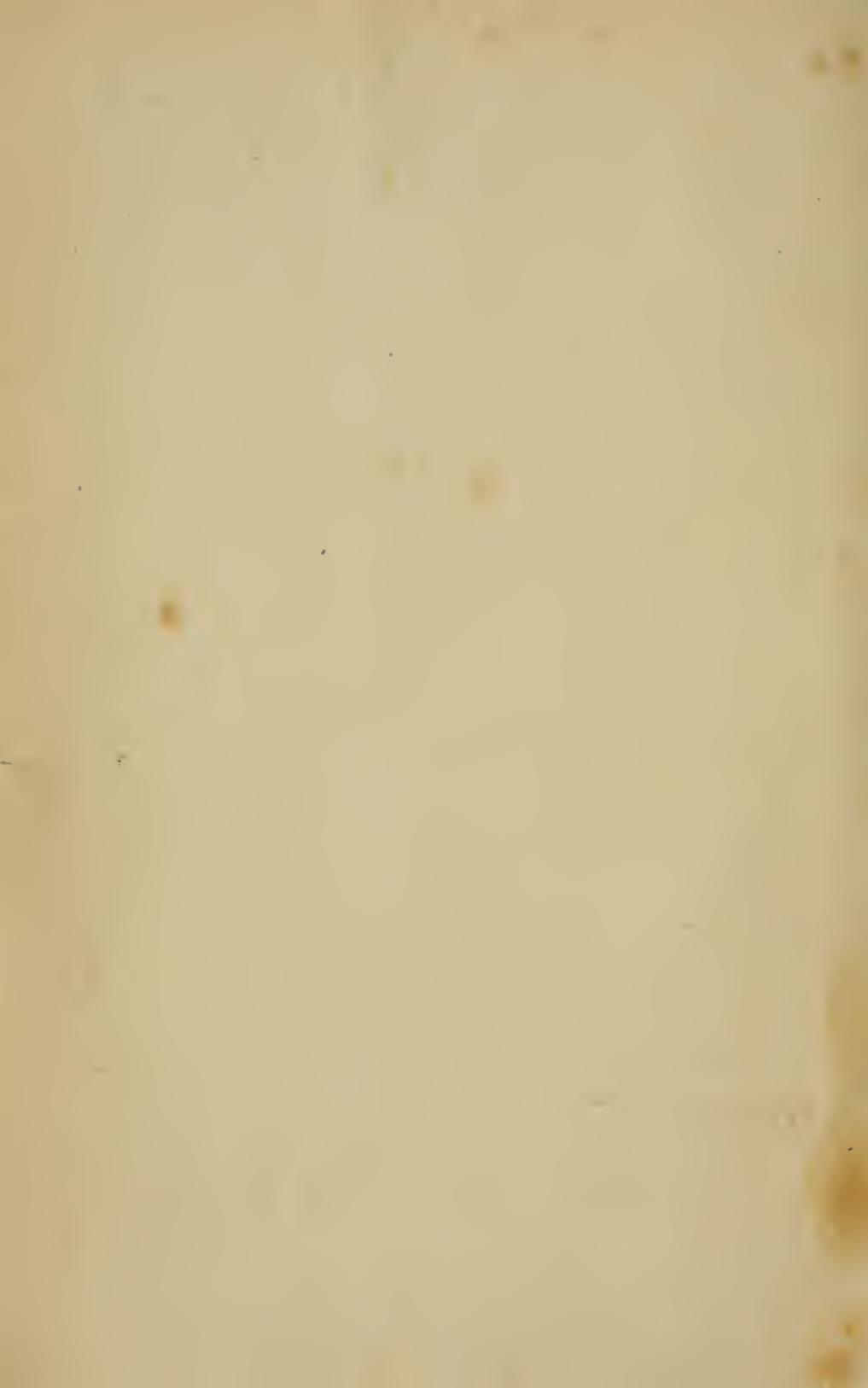


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OUR UNEMPLOYED:
AN ATTEMPT TO POINT OUT SOME OF THE
BEST MEANS OF PROVIDING
OCCUPATION FOR DISTRESSED LABOURERS;
WITH SUGGESTIONS ON A
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF LABOUR REGISTRATION;
AND OTHER MATTERS AFFECTING THE
WELL-BEING OF THE POOR.

BY
ALSAGER HAY HILL, LL.B.,
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW:
AND AN EX-ALMONER OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN EASTERN LONDON.

“LABORARE EST ORARE.”

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PREFATORY NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

It may perhaps be well to state that the present paper in its original form, now much amplified, is one of a large number sent in, in answer to an offer of a prize, by Mr. W. R. Lloyd, of Birmingham, for the best Essay on a "Feasible Plan for the Temporary Employment of Operatives and Workmen in Casual Distress," and that with another Essay, by Mr. John Scott, it was fortunate enough to be "highly commended" by the Council of the Association for Promoting Social Science in making their award.

It appears, however, to the present author, after a careful perusal of Mr. Arthur R. Arnold's Essay on the same subject, and to which very properly Mr. Lloyd's prize was awarded, that the experience of that gentleman and the excellent suggestions which that experience has supplied him with in his paper, have more immediate relation to the necessities of Lancashire in 1863-64 than those of London and other large cities at the present time, and in their execution might not altogether cover the extensive ground occupied by this important question.

The present author's experience has been more distinctly metropolitan, and the suggestions which he offers are consequently mainly based on that experience. Therefore, whilst admitting in every way the merit and clearness of Mr. Arnold's propositions as far as they go, the author still ventures to hope, if Mr. Arnold will permit him so to express himself, that the views propounded in this paper may serve to some extent as a supplementary chapter to the larger treatment of the subject which Mr. Arnold has already placed before the public. With this view the author is emboldened to offer his own scheme, and the general remarks which accompany it, and as a slender contribution towards the study of a great problem, which is daily becoming more difficult of solution, they may perhaps be acceptable to some.

A few appendices on subjects cognate to that of the Essay itself are added as representative of the author's views, and for

what they may be worth to thinkers and writers in the same direction.

Two or three valuable letters in the Daily Press from other pens have also been reprinted, with those of the author, in the appendices.

Written, necessarily, at a distance from all sources of statistical and other materials of information, the present Essay is, as the author too well knows, somewhat deficient in array of facts to support his own views, but it is, even with these imperfections, he hopes not altogether theoretical, and if the scheme it suggests be not considered feasible in its entirety, it may perhaps supply some sound materials towards a final settlement of the difficulties it discusses.

New University Club, St. James' Street, S.W.

28th November, 1868.

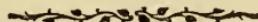
OUR UNEMPLOYED:

AN ATTEMPT TO POINT OUT

SOME OF THE BEST MEANS OF PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT
FOR OPERATIVES AND WORKMEN IN CASUAL DISTRESS;

WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF LABOUR REGI-
STRATION: AND A FEW APPENDICES ON COGNATE
SUBJECTS.



THE difficulty of providing occupation for the unemployed poor, especially in our great cities, forces itself more urgently upon our attention year by year. Each winter brings with it the tale of unmitigated, if not increased distress among certain sections of the working classes. This distress, moreover, after all reasonable allowance has been made for the improvidence and incompetence which reduce too many of our workmen to want and misery, is undoubtedly in a great measure attributable to an overstocked labour market, for which, hitherto, no satisfactory relief has been devised. Schemes of various kinds have from time to time been put forward by zealous and benevolent persons to meet the difficulty, but one and all have failed to accomplish the object sought. Some of these schemes, in the present state of society, have been, on the very face of them, impracticable; others, again, have been of such vast dimensions and so expensive in their operation, that they have been unable to secure the support, either public or private, which would be necessary for a fair experiment. On one side we have been told that wholesale emigration is the sole panacea for the evils complained of; on the other side we hear colonies already complaining of the useless populations transferred to their shores. From one quarter we learn on high authority that the slow processes of education, working down to the roots of society, are, by the extinction of vice, to eradicate pauperism; from another quarter, and on seemingly equal authority, we learn that up to the present time this boasted education has only rendered our domestic servants idle and incapable, and will tend more and more to make *all* wage-earners dissatisfied. Some, again, turn to the reclamation of our waste lands (though hitherto but few of such places have definitely been pointed to as suitable for

the experiment) as the best provision for our unemployed poor, whilst others inform us, with the deepest concern, that agricultural profits are already so small that a bare maintenance, and often scarcely that, is all that is to be expected by the best labourers on the soil. In this diversity, and as will be seen, too frequent contradiction of opinion on the premises, it is indeed difficult to see our way to even a partial solution of the problem propounded. It will, however, I think, be found on close examination of the true point at issue, that much of the conflicting, if not erroneous, treatment recommended in this matter has arisen, in a great measure, from a misapprehension of the disease to be cured. Now, however, in considering some aspects of this misapprehension, it is not necessary to enter very minutely into the difficult question whether at the present time England is over-populated or not. It is sufficient for my purpose, in the present paper, to admit the fact of a large and probably increasing body of periodically unemployed poor existing in the country. But to provide a remedy for this apparently unnatural condition of things, it is most essential to analyse with great nicety the constituent elements of this unemployed class ; and it is in forgetfulness of this necessity that most of the misapprehension I allude to has arisen. It is a very common error even for public men to write and speak of the unemployed poor as if composed of one great uniform mass, with common inclinations and common capacities, and only awaiting some common field of labour to be at once converted from an inert and obstructive host of do-nothings into a methodical army of industrious citizens. Presuming on this fallacy, many have not hesitated to point to the public works undertaken by Lancashire operatives, belonging as they did to the best section of our artisan life, and engaged as they were on work carried out during temporary distress, with every prospect of an early resumption of their old employment, as conclusive proof that a similar experiment might be made with similar success in Eastern London and other places where the crisis is now most urgent. I should contend, however, in answer to this view, and even after a careful study of Mr. Arnold's recent able paper on the subject,* that the conditions of the new experiment would be essentially different, and in the main unfavourable to a satisfactory result. The heterogeneous mass which forms the bulk of London pauperism, and also of that stratum of the labouring class which lies immediately above pauperism, and with which we are more immediately concerned, is in its elements very different from that large but compact body on which the Lancashire experiment was made. Moreover, the probability of a return to their usual occupations when better times came round again, as I hinted before, takes the Lancashire labourers, in a great degree, out of that category of the unemployed with which I have now chiefly to do. The unemployed with whom we are concerned must be

* "Plan for the Temporary Employment of Operatives and Workmen in Casual Distress, by R. Arthur Arnold, Late Government Inspector of Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act 1863, etc." London, 1, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

considered, at least for the purposes of this paper, and as far as ordinary foresight can anticipate, in a chronic difficulty—though not in actual chronic destitution; the remedy, therefore, which is suggested must be of a fairly permanent nature also. In addition to this fact it must not be forgotten that in the case of Lancashire a large charitable fund was provided in addition to the rates levied for public works, to meet the exceptional distress of the time; but in wider calculations for the relief and advancement of the unemployed poor generally, we must assume no such adventitious machinery in aid. That from time to time great exceptional distress will require exceptional remedies, taking the form of charity, such as have of late years been under the very imperfect organisation of our Poor Laws, provided in Eastern London, I should not attempt to deny, but in an endeavour to devise some thorough scheme for meeting the chronic or frequently recurring necessities of our unemployed poor, I must now leave out of consideration all machinery of a purely charitable order, and confine myself as closely as possible to the true politico-economical, and, as far as may be, commercial bearings of the question. On these grounds, then, I can admit little or no analogy between the real difficulties and their remedies as presented by Lancashire in 1863, and Eastern London in 1868. To return, however, to the matter from which I have thus temporarily, but not without occasion, digressed, viz., a survey of the unemployed class for which present necessities call upon us to provide. I have described this class as a thoroughly heterogeneous one, and, indeed, no existing process of social chemistry would be fine enough to resolve it into all its elementary atoms. It may be worth while, however, to point out a few results of the roughest analysis to which this mass may be submitted, and in no way will the difficulties of the problem which I have set myself to discuss be more forcibly apparent. In the first place, a very large proportion of the “unemployed poor” must, under present circumstances, become at various seasons temporarily distressed from the very conditions of their life. In this first class must be ranged the whole army of dock labourers and others whose employment at the best of times is but casual and uncertain, and, dependent as they literally are on wind and weather for their bread, their incomes must always be of a slender and fluctuating nature, so that even the average earnings of the year would be difficult to ascertain with any degree of nicety. The wages of such men seldom rising above three-and-sixpence a day, it is obvious that in the cultivation of thrift and an economical expenditure lies their sole security against frequent want and ultimate pauperism; and even with the best management, and under the most favourable circumstances the generally large families of these men are but too liable to come to our poor rates for support in time of pressure. Moreover, work such as they have been accustomed to cannot be *created* for them, so as to afford a constant wage throughout the year, whilst the varying necessities of the docks do not permit of the labourers taking up any other employment with certainty for the space of

many days together. Here then lies the difficulty, and, assuming that the profits of wharfingers and others who employ these men are not excessive, and that employers could not reasonably afford a proper yearly maintenance to the same or even to a somewhat smaller number of men, as I have said before, the remedy in this case, if any, must rest with themselves. When, however, the resources of the men are obviously not sufficient to meet reverses, the Poor Law, wisely administered, is the only assistance in aid that I feel here justified in advocating. That some exemplary members of this class do succeed in supporting themselves and their families in respectability and even comfort is undeniable, but the struggle is a hard one, and triumph not even to be expected of the mass. No scheme that we could devise from the outside could meet the whole requirements of this position ; though perhaps a careful system of Registration, of which I shall have more to say hereafter, might afford some alleviation of the more pressing evils of casual labour. The mere existence of casual labour amongst us must and always will create the difficulties which I have here intimated, and therefore it will not be to this branch of workmen, though forming part of the unemployed class, that attention must be more particularly directed now.

There is again another, and that a large body of the unemployed, for whom it would be equally difficult to establish any permanent and efficient system of relief beyond the Poor Laws. The class I now allude to is that which draws its scanty wages from the rapidly dying trades which still survive in Eastern London and elsewhere ; amongst which may be prominently cited that of hand-loom weaving, which still engages the labour of many hundreds, if not thousands, in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green. In this once flourishing trade the earnings are now most pitifully small—a man toiling from early morning until late at night making at the most from twelve to fourteen shillings a week ; many earning considerably less. To reduce the number engaged in this trade by offering attractions in other departments of labour, would of course be a mighty service, but to systematically employ this great body of men now eking out a scanty livelihood at the loom, at liberal wages in other callings, would be, in my opinion, a hopeless and impossible ambition. Any measures which would tend to deter the next generation from following in the unhappy path of their fathers, would, however, be most commendable, and no missionary effort could be better directed than to such an end ; but that is not the object I have now in view, and it was only to shew in its true colours another difficult constituent of the unemployed class that I have alluded to it at all. But before I pass on to my own suggestions as to some of the best means of employment now to be adopted, there is yet another class of the unemployed which requires the fullest recognition at the hands of all who attempt a practical, and not merely a theoretical, solution of our difficulty. This class, which is a very large one, I can only designate by the name of “the incompetent” class, and consists of the great mass of the weakly

poor, as well as of the rough, idle, and uneducated fellows whom the accretion of great cities, the inefficiency of our Poor Laws, and the want of a thorough system of industrial training have bred up in our midst. In the present condition of some parts of London, where the population of a single street often exceeds that of a large village in the country, and where the very elements of Christianity and civilization seem to be entirely lost sight of, the reclamation of these beings baffles as yet the most far-sighted of our statesmen and philanthropists. As has just been hinted, the rude and wholesale machinery of the Poor Law is quite insufficient to sift and classify the great mass of humanity continually passing under its operation. Half-results, like all half-results, of little or no value, are all that we have as yet obtained from the system, and the "casual pauper" seems to be as difficult and intractable a creature as modern civilization is acquainted with. That a thorough and uniform administration of a good Poor Law, unincumbered by the numerous and contradictory charities* which now clog its working, lies at the root of all sound schemes for the gradual regeneration, if not extinction, of the "casual" class, cannot, I think, be doubted, and any agitation which will bring about better administration and more thorough results should have our warmest adherence. Meanwhile, I must recognize the fact that this vast body of incompetent men, from whom are generated the clamorous malcontents who follow the leadership of such men as Mr. Finlen and his brethren, must be provided for in some way, and no longer be permitted to grow into such social festers as certain later manifestations in Eastern London† might lead us to apprehend as on the increase in our midst. Nevertheless, the attempt to suddenly provide employment for these "incompetent," would, as the very name I have adopted for them implies, be worse than hopeless. The task, if it is accomplished at all, will indeed be a slow and a difficult one. The recognition of this class as semi-criminal, and their enforced labour under a strict but considerate official supervision alone, to my mind, afford any prospect of successful results. I say *semi-criminal*, as the class just treated of is not synonymous with that of *vagrants*, also a formidable enough body in their way, for which, however, the law has already made stricter and, if carried out, *sufficient* provision already. Now, whether these "incompetents" in their own country would fare better in the colonies is a question difficult to answer without a larger colonial experience than I am at present possessed of; but I should be much afraid that the "ne'er-do-wells" of Whitechapel would, in all probability, be the "ne'er-do-wells" of Victoria or any other distant Eutopia also. And certain of our colonial authorities

* On the operation of some of these charities in the past, and their probable recurrence this year, if I rightly interpret the signs of the season, manifested by the old appeals from diverse sources of philanthropic zeal, already making themselves heard in the papers, see Appendix A. Letter from East End Incumbent, and Author's Letter to *Standard*, February 11, 1868.

† See Report of Proceedings of the Unemployed Poor League, weekly papers, *passim*, as illustrative of my meaning.

appear already to have arrived at this unsatisfactory conclusion.* That a widespread system of education of the rising generation, and the improvement of our poorer dwellings will gradually conduce to the diminution if not extinction of this unfortunate class, I, in my own judgment, have little doubt. Meanwhile the members of it must, I am afraid, be considered as the morbid, if necessary, phenomena of a rapidly-grown and uneven civilization, and be treated accordingly. Again, therefore, I repeat, that no system of simple employment that we could submit for consideration would, or could, meet the necessities of this third large class, which I have thought it necessary to allude to in reducing the really industrious unemployed to their proper limits. Nevertheless, and to return to the main object of this paper, admitting a large number of the unemployed poor to fall within the three classes I have now roughly described, viz., casual labourers—(1) proper, made so by the very nature of their occupations, and whose comparative comfort rests in their own hands; (2) the representatives of decaying and underpaid trades; and (3) the incompetents, upon whose skirts hang the vagrants, or “incorrigibles,” as I fear they might more correctly be described, there still remains a large residuum of honest, thrifty, and industrious men, who, from the variation of trade, inevitable losses, and other causes, too obvious to be enumerated here, are sufficiently often out of employment for long periods of time, and consequently destitute (for the mere suspension of employment without pressing want creates, as it seems to me, no claim for outside assistance), to render some well-considered scheme of *classification* and *employment* most desirable and necessary. And here I would lay great and emphatic stress on the principle of **CLASSIFICATION**. Without some method of classification, as I had occasion to point out in my passing allusions to Poor Law inefficiency, nothing can be accomplished.† How this classification can be best brought about, will, therefore, at once demand our attention, and as an adjunct to classification of men, classification of labour will necessarily follow. The knowledge of the work to be obtained, and the place where it is obtainable is obviously as essential as a knowledge of the men to carry it out when it is found, and the capacities of those who are willing to undertake it. I shall, therefore, dismiss for the present all consideration of the more obvious, though indirect, and general means by which employment is obtained, as, for instance, improved education, increased intelligence in the search for work, and superior skill in the performance of it, and simply confine myself to some practical suggestions

* I leave, however, the consideration of this question in its details to more enthusiastic advocates of emigration than myself, and I doubt not but that many of this incompetent class, if taken in time and transplanted under proper supervision, might at least grow up as inoffensive members of society elsewhere. See also “Emigration” Appendix B. It may, however, be well to note, on the other hand, that the success of Miss Rye’s experiment with female emigrants, for some time disputed, is now an acknowledged fact. See Canadian papers, *passim*. May she continue her labour with increasing good results!

† For a few suggestions on the classification of paupers, see Author’s “Letter to *Times*,” January 9, 1860. Appendix C.

for bringing about the classification required. I shall then submit my proposals as to the best works or duties to be undertaken by the now *unemployed poor* in the limited sense in which I have accepted that term, concluding with a few general suggestions in the direction of reform which the present aspects of this most important subject have afforded.

For purposes of classification, then, and to afford facilities for the unemployed obtaining occupation with the least possible inconvenience and delay, a system of Registration seems to me the most practical method to adopt in the interests both of masters and men. However, to make this registration in the fullest measure useful and conducive to the ends sought, it must be general, and as far as possible co-extensive with the wants and operations of the whole labour market throughout the kingdom. No doubt, in the first instance, the formation of labour registers in London and other of our great industrial centres would afford a sufficient field for enterprise and experiment, but to make it a really complete, and, so to speak, exhaustive institution, its limits must be those of the entire nation. Of the strength and time lost under existing circumstances in a profitless search for employment, all who are in any way acquainted with the habits and lives of our working classes are too painfully conscious. A walk of many miles day after day, with no earnings at the end of it, forms the too common lot of the unemployed workman. I have myself known sober and industrious men wearily repeat this process for weeks together. As far as I know, the only machinery, if such it can be called, which now exists for supplying information to the unemployed on the requirement of their several branches of labour, is that of the public-houses of call, made use of by the various trades as the best, though a very rough and often dangerous method of inquiry. Of course, the penny press has also done much to facilitate the search for employment, and a daily reference to the advertisements (also generally at public-houses), is a usual, but, in the end, very extravagant means adopted by most working men for ascertaining their opportunities of work. Again, I am aware that, from the difficulties and inconveniences resultant on the more general range of advertisements of the London papers, the local journals, of which there is now a numerous tribe in the metropolis and elsewhere, are beginning to furnish in their register of local wants much assistance to the unemployed; but there is still wanting, in my opinion, a thorough and permanent system of registration, both national and local, by a reference to which the requirements of the market might be more immediately gauged, and the tedious search for labour materially abridged.* In forming such a system of registration as appears to me necessary, I would suggest that the existing machinery

* As a minor but most useful auxiliary in providing employment for the poor, the establishment of good reading-rooms may here be mentioned, and has already received the attention of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union (150, Strand), which I believe is daily extending its sphere of usefulness in this direction.

of the Post Office Savings Bank might, without too wide a departure from its original objects, be most wisely and beneficially employed. I assume that as the business of these institutions increases, separate offices, unconnected, as is, in small towns, now frequently the case, with ordinary shops, will be instituted in each district, and in that case the addition of a Labour Register, such as I propose, to the ordinary branches of the Savings and Insurance Department, would, I believe, be very productive to the managers and beneficial to the State. I would suggest, then, in furtherance of my idea, that at each Post Office Savings Bank, or in some cases, perhaps, at each Central District Office only, a register of situations vacant and also of persons seeking situations should be kept, such register to be posted up daily in the office for the inspection of all persons interested, whether amongst masters or men. I would further suggest that the various district registers, as soon as published, should be posted or supplied at certain central offices, thereby admitting a larger area of operation and, consequently, wider opportunities of securing work to the unemployed. Perhaps a Weekly Metropolitan Register, in which the wants of the various districts, compiled from the local registers, would appear, might also be published by the authorities at a low price and within the reach of every workman. This, however, is matter of detail which it is not necessary to elaborate here. Meanwhile, I offer my scheme of the Labour Registers, worked, if possible, in conjunction with the Post Office to the consideration of Mr. Gladstone (whose excellent creation the institutions to which I desire to attach them are), or to any others who may be sufficiently powerful or public-spirited to take this great question in hand.*

Hitherto my scheme, as now propounded, would only embrace the metropolitan area—a sufficiently extensive field to commence with, but I see no difficulty in stretching its operations over the country at large in the following manner. For the great centres of industry, such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, the metropolitan system, on a somewhat reduced scale, would be sufficient and, I think, feasible; but for the country, and especially the more agricultural districts, a considerable modification would be no doubt necessary. In the latter-mentioned districts I should suggest the keeping of registers at the several post offices; but in place of the District Central Registers, the publication and subsequent posting up of a County Register in each market-place on market days: by such means the wants of the agricultural classes would be widely known

* The proven usefulness of the Post Office Savings Banks as instruments of provident education is now acknowledged on all hands, and the extension which I now propose will tend, in my opinion, to render them infinitely more so.

Whether the business now taken up by the countless Friendly and Benefit Societies, on whose proceedings Mr. Tidd Pratt has so often thrown the light of a searching scrutiny, might not also be grafted on to the insurance department of the office, I only here throw out as a suggestion. Making our Poor-Law medical officers responsible for the necessary certificates of health or disease would be an admirable security to the State, and afford a good supplementary income to an able and underpaid class of our public servants.

and rapidly supplied—and many of the difficulties and wrongs now so earnestly pointed out to us by Canon Girdlestone and others be met and mastered. The weekly publication of this County Register for general circulation, and to meet the wants of persons unable to attend the nearest market towns, would be a further natural and advisable feature of my county system; and I would suggest that such Weekly Register might be kept on sale at all the post offices throughout the district, by this means bringing it within the reach and under the notice of the humblest cottagers. No doubt the difficulties resultant on the present ignorance and general low condition of the country labourer, and to some extent the town workman also, will be urged on me against the adoption of the plan; but I have reason to believe that education, imperfect as it is, is now sufficiently diffused to make such a machinery as I propose to construct available, either through himself or the agency of a friend, to almost every workman in the country. The question of expense in the construction and carrying out of this registration scheme will of course be presented to me on the threshold, and no doubt so extensive, and in some ways complex, a new branch of the public service would seem to demand a considerable and continuous outlay for its support. I am, however, disposed to think that, after the canvassing for, and wide diffusion of, the first few numbers were completed, the demand for the printed register would be very large, and as affording an admirable and most extensive vehicle for advertisement to the whole employed wage-classes of the country, would in a short time become thoroughly self-supporting. Under any circumstances the already existing machinery of the Post Office, being immediately available, though doubtless with a necessity for extension, would render the experiment far less expensive to the nation than it otherwise would be, and I have but little doubt that a fair commission on the advertisements issued with the register and the official monopoly afforded to the publishers would be quite sufficient to induce enterprising men in each district to undertake the publication on reasonable if not, indeed, as I strongly believe, gratuitous terms.* The experiment of gratuitous publications used exclusively as mediums of advertising has already been widely and successfully made, and I think such a one as I now advocate, made, as it would be, under State sanction, could hardly fail to be a triumph. In some cases a small fee might, as in ordinary newspapers, be asked for the insertion of any special want by masters or men, and would no doubt be readily paid. The existing indifference of masters and the carelessness of men, in the protection of their best interests, only too forcibly exhibited in the recent experiences of the Free Labour Society, established about a year since, to whose entire scheme or principles I do not by this remark in any way pledge myself—are, in my opinion, the

* Whilst correcting the proofs of this passage, a paper, "*The British Tribune*," inserting advertisements representing the wants of master or man gratuitously has been placed in my hand, and is a confirmatory fact which I cannot omit to avail myself of here.

most probable and formidable obstacles in the way of immediate and complete success, but I trust as the advantages of the system become more apparent and felt amongst them, the assistance and support both of masters and men would be more readily and cordially given.

There is one other feature of my scheme which I have omitted to mention, but which may be introduced here by way of suggestion and without any assured certainty of its practicability—though I have good reason to think it might in many places be made of signal service. I refer to the institution and filing of *Certificates of Competence* on the part of workman at the local registries, by means of which the ability of the workman might, to a considerable extent, be ascertained before employment under the register system which I have suggested. Without some such *testamur* of competence the acceptance of workmen, especially when resident at a distance, through the registry system might prove both difficult and hazardous—but the due signature by an employer of a recognized Certificate of Competence in the respective trade or employment to which the workman belonged might go far to facilitate the migration and ordinary engagement of labourers; it being assumed that proper provision should be made whereby the forgery or transference of such certificates from one person to another, for whom they were not originally intended, would constitute a misdemeanour at law, and so prevent what might appear, at first sight, an easy and safe abuse of such a machinery for employing workmen. As things at present exist, the ignorance, and too often, I repeat, the indifference of masters prevent the workman from obtaining a proper assurance of either his service or ability on quitting one place and seeking another. With the plan proposed, a duly accredited certificate, in the main *printed* for convenience, with the date of its being granted, and the signature of employer, would, in the hands of a good workman, be the best credentials he could offer, and if extended over long periods of time, without break or qualification, furnish evidence of respectability and character, which, in investigation for suitable relief under the Poor Law, and even in many other circumstances which may arise in a workman's career, would be of the utmost value. The question of certificates is, as I well know, attended with many and considerable difficulties, which I have not the space to discuss here; but whether or no in its entirety my system of labour registration would be found so practicable as I myself believe it—it is, I think, worthy, at any rate, of a careful consideration by all persons who have the real interests of the working classes at heart, and to such I commend it, quite conscious of its imperfections, but in the full hope that it has such germs of usefulness within it, as proper cultivation and expansion may develop into a desirable institution. The many imperfect attempts which the classes most interested in the matter have already made in providing for their wants and the regulation of the labour market, some of which I have pointed out before, indicate the real necessity of some comprehensive and satisfactory scheme by which the several requirements of master

and man can be efficiently recognized and supplied, and in default of a more complete solution to the problem my present plan is proposed. That such a plan would be materially aided by the increased intelligence of our working classes, and the consequent establishment of Local Institutes, Reading Rooms, and other places where the machinery of my suggested registries could be made more available to all, is of course obvious; but, in the meanwhile, a system of registration, the outlines of which I have now described, would go far to promote that recognition of common interests and fair co-operation amongst masters and men, without which no ultimate and satisfactory adjustment of their present inequalities and ignorances can reasonably be expected.* By the thorough working of such a registration as I propose, more especially if the system of Certificates of Competence, alluded to before, was associated with it, one great result in the direction in which I am in this paper moving, would, at any rate, follow, in an ascertaining and recognition, from time to time, and at short intervals also, of the real condition and necessities of the labour market. With such tabulated and official evidence as to the relative numbers of the employed and unemployed as this registry would afford (evidence which now lies, as it were, in patches, scattered over the whole mass of the daily press and the various trade organs which, no doubt, in part, already meet the difficulty), many of the great problems which the relative advantages of Emigration and other schemes for assisting the unemployed now suggest, would be materially lightened, whilst a good standard guage for testing the numbers and obstructiveness of the great incompetent class referred to earlier in this paper, would be established amongst us. It is hardly necessary to say that such a guage would be of vital usefulness to all social reformers and economists now working at terrible disadvantage amid the *ruulis indigestaque moles* of modern statistics and returns. As I before observed, to know the real constituent elements of the mass we have to deal with is the first condition of success in acting upon it, and in no way that I can conceive of shall we be better able to separate the body of the really industrious but unemployed poor from the clamorous horde of idle, dissatisfied and incompetent folk who cumber our labour-market and prey on the best sympathies of the benevolent, than by some such method of registration as is here shadowed forth.

And now having to the best of my present power devised a means for ascertaining the actual condition, necessities, and requirements of the unemployed, I proceed, though with great diffidence, to the consideration of a suitable scheme for the subsequent employment of the persons so situated. It is obvious, consistently with the view

* The proceedings at the last Conference of the Social Science Association, in connection with Mr. Mundella's excellent system of conciliation and arbitration, point to a better state of things, and are only, I believe, the beginning of a long series of triumphs in the same direction. Mr. Mundella's election to Parliament since this note was written is to be looked upon as, in part, a happy fulfilment of my prophecy above.

that I proposed to myself at the outset, that any such scheme as I may suggest, must be in its nature strictly justifiable on politico-economical grounds, without which condition being fulfilled no social change, however apparently good at the moment, can be of any value, and also, if possible, of a sufficiently permanent character to meet the continuous necessities of the unemployed, and not the mere emergency of the times—this latter condition rendering, as I have before said, our task a far more difficult one than was afforded by the cotton famine in Lancashire, or any other labour crisis which I can now recall to my recollection.* To proceed, however, with the suggestions that I have to make for the more immediate assistance of the unemployed. I have alluded elsewhere to the proposals that have been made in some quarters for the reclamation and improvement of waste and uncultivated lands in England as a means of providing for the unemployed. And on this subject, although doubtful myself as to the thorough practicability of the schemes as yet proposed, I think, in the present uncertainty that exists in the public mind, a *Royal Commission* to inquire into the extent and condition of such lands as could be made available for the experiment might be reasonably demanded from the new Parliament, and might moreover be attended with most valuable results. The same commission would naturally inquire into the willingness or otherwise of the several proprietors throughout the country to meet such schemes of reclamation in a liberal spirit, and also as to the probable profits from the cultivation of such lands under the most favourable conditions which could be obtained for the experiment. Upon the report of such a commission, and taking into consideration the present condition of the unemployed poor throughout the country, an Act might be framed giving to a body of commissioners the necessary power to enrol labourers, and organize operations throughout the country, and providing at the same time for fair and reasonable arrangements with landlords, with such compensation to the owners, or remuneration to contractors appointed by the commissioners as circumstances might entitle them to. A scheme of “Home-colonization” has lately been put forward by the Unemployed Poor League, to which body I have called attention elsewhere, and appears to have met with the approval of some aspirant M.P.s, but till the plan has taken a more definite shape than the deliberations at Hoxton have as yet given to us, it would be premature to discuss its practicability.

* From a consideration of this aspect of the question I am induced again to repeat my opinion, expressed before, that the plan detailed in Mr. Arnold's pamphlet, though possibly sufficient for the wants of Lancashire in 1863, is not comprehensive enough for the wants of the whole country, and especially of our cities, even with the extensions so carefully elaborated in his paper.

Within the last few days Mr. Moule, whose name in connexion with the Dry-Earth System of Sewerage occurs later on in this paper, has again put forward a scheme for “Boarding Schools” for sons of labouring men. His idea of combining plain instruction with the finer cultivation of lands now given up to general farming makes his plan well worthy of consideration in this connexion. See his letter, with scheme appended, *Times*, Nov. 21, 1868.

See, however, *Daily News*, November 12 and 13, and *Beehive*, November 14, 1868. Hitherto the profits resultant from reclaimed lands and the conditions under which such reclamation can be best carried out, have been but very indistinctly ascertained, and any accurate information on these points would be of the highest possible value. Under the simple plan which I have here proposed, the merits of the scheme, so long talked of as a panacea, would at least be fairly investigated, and impartially represented after such investigation had taken place. As far as I can learn up to the present time, attempts to reclaim large districts, such as Exmoor and other places, formerly abandoned to the roughest pasturage, have not been attended with that success which the more enthusiastic apostles of reclamation would lead us to anticipate; but it is possible there may be other districts which could be worked with more reasonable hopes of public profit, and to such districts the labours of a Royal Commission would be more immediately directed. The experiences of Dartmoor, portions of which in the neighbourhood of the prisons are now cultivated by convict labour, and which I have had opportunities of observing myself, are not, I think, to be quoted as fair illustrations of what would probably be accomplished by such a system of registered labour as might result from the recommendations of such a commission as is here suggested. The exceptional conditions under which the Dartmoor Farm is cultivated and the great expense at which the certainly remarkable results thus exhibited have been attained, take it altogether out of comparison with the experiments which I am for the moment presuming to result from a general reclamation of the waste lands of the country.

The commission which I suggest would, however, by the creation of a Central Board and the elaboration of appropriate district machinery, suitable to the wants of the several places falling under its operations, be enabled to conduct the experiment with the best possible chances of success, and from the consciousness of this fact I think the speedy constitution of such a commission on many grounds most desirable. At the same time it is not to the reclamation of waste lands in the country that I myself now look as the most valuable or immediately practicable field for the assistance of our unemployed, but to other and more recently created departments of labour, to which I shall now direct my attention. Any complete or perfect elaboration of the scheme I have here to suggest would, however, be impossible within the limits of this paper. It will be sufficient to sketch the outlines, and indicate as far as I can the manner in which they may hereafter be filled up. I would propose then, that as far as possible all public works carried out under statutory provisions, and, as will in future be the case, under statutory *compulsion*, should be executed to the fullest practicable measure, under such a system of registered labour as I have in the earlier part of this paper propounded. The class of works to which I now allude will be best represented by such as will naturally, and I trust extensively, arise out of the provisions of the recent "*Artizans and Labourers Dwellings' Act*," 1868, the due execution of which, as I

shall point out immediately, being in a great measure dependent on the public spirit and benevolent energies of the district in which the Act operates.* It will be remembered that under Mr. Torrens' Act just referred to, provision is made for improving or pulling down places occupied by working men and their families, which in the Preamble of the Act are described as "unfit for human habitation." Premises falling under the description contemplated by the Act can now be represented by four or more householders in the neighbourhood (Sect. 12), as suitable for treatment in the manner provided by the Statute, and the Local Officers of Health are to report on such premises, and when so required the owners are to improve the dwellings or to demolish the same (Sect. 20). In the event of the Local Officer not certifying according to the representations of the householders, provision is made for an appeal to higher authority, under whose order, if it be deemed expedient, the improvement or demolition will still take place.† Where expenses are incurred a charge is to be given on the property in the shape of a mortgage, and an annual sum by way of payment for work enforced. Where, however, a local authority executes the works, money may be borrowed of the Public Loan Commissioners and others, and "a charging order" made on the property.

The above are the principal provisions of the Act in the direction which I desire to follow it out now, and I have, therefore, not thought it necessary to set out in detail the minuter provisions that may at once be found on reference to the Statute itself. The assertion of the principle of compulsory improvement, and an outline of the manner in which it seems to me it may be best applied, are all that the compass of this paper admit of now. The principle of compulsory improvement or demolition, even against the wishes of the landlord, being admitted, it remains to be seen how the extra labour created by the operation of this principle can be most economically and expeditiously supplied. I am of opinion, then, that for such works as these compulsory clauses institute, it may reasonably be contended that the cheapest efficient labour should be provided; and I can see no ground for objecting to the use and absorption on these works, of that class of the unemployed with which only, as I have before defined them, this paper is concerned. With thoroughly competent workmen employed throughout the undertaking, it is obvious that the market would speedily adjust itself, but in the earlier stages of the experiment I contemplate

* The despondent tone adopted by Dr. Rumsey and other high authorities at the recent Social Science Congress at Birmingham, as to the operation of this Act, augurs ill for its success; but under the system of voluntary organization advocated in this paper, and not hinted at at the Congress, its prospects may be better.

† How little this excellent provision has as yet been sufficient to bring about the desired ends, is painfully demonstrated by certain letters in recent numbers of the *Daily News*, emanating from a "District Visitor" in St. Mary-the-less, Lambeth, and the action of the Islington Vestry, on Dr. Ballard's representation in the latter locality, leads us to fear that a really disinterested organization for carrying out the "Artizans and Labourers Dwellings' Act" will alone meet the prejudices and difficulties which surround the case. See *Daily News*, Oct. 3d, also *Lancet*, 1st th, 1868.

there would no doubt be a large number of somewhat inexperienced hands to whom inferior work alone could be entrusted, and for whose labour the wages would naturally be small. The proper distribution and accommodation of the unemployed class would no doubt be matters requiring great judgment and discrimination on the part of the contractors or overseers engaged in the works, but by means of the registration before proposed, these processes would be much facilitated. Moreover, the very nature of the works under Mr. Torrens' Act, involving, as they often would, demolition and removal of materials, would afford for a time at least ample employment to the most unskilled of labourers, and it is on this ground especially that I think the scheme I now propose more feasible in its development than many hitherto submitted to public consideration.* The difficulty of finding employment for that great body of our working population whom I have elsewhere, speaking comparatively, of course, ventured to describe as "incompetents," has hitherto proved the great obstacle in the way of solving the problem, and the supererogatory and unprofitable labour of many of our workhouses has long been matter of comment and scorn with all real reformers. Under such a system as Mr. Torrens' Act inauguates, the ignominious tasks of carrying stone or gravel from side to side of the workhouse yard, and all similar non-productive occupation of our poor should be for ever abolished. In their place work profitable alike to the men employed and the community which employs them would be at once provided. The inability to find employment would no longer be the idle excuse of an idle mind, or, if persisted in, would at once sink the alleged sufferer into that semi-criminal stratum of the unemployed to which I have called attention before, and for which a proper and wholesome severity of treatment ought to be at once provided by our Poor Law Authorities.

It will not, I think, be contended by any, even of the most Eutopian temperament, that there is not in London and elsewhere † in our large cities at the present time, ample scope for the immediate and, as far as we can foresee, continuous operation of Mr. Torrens' and similar Acts for a long time to come. Every officer of health, and hundreds of volunteer workers in the same direction, are agreed upon this point, if on no other. In the interests of health, morality, and Christianity itself, something must be done, and that something speedily, if we desire to turn back the tide of † increasing pauperism which has already so steadily set in, and which all our

* The rapidity with which even labourers unused to such work may, by good industrial training, be converted into competent workmen, assuming that no *moral* deficiency exists in the men (for it is with moral deficiencies rather than technical that our chief difficulty lies; a fact, I think, not sufficiently recognised by Mr. Arnold) is admirably illustrated from experience in Mr. Arnold's essay, referred to before. See pages 9 & 14.

† See Mr. Godwin's remarks on Birmingham, at recent Social Science Congress, in support of this; also provincial papers, *passim*.

† In support of an often-contested but indubitable fact, the *increase* of pauperism, see Statistics on "Poor Rates and Pauperism," *Standard*, February, 1868.

local machinery has hitherto failed to control or check. It remains, therefore, admitting the evil, to apply at once the remedies provided by the Act. And here at once we are furnished with a fulcrum which hitherto the mere action of the official mind, as working through Local Officers of Health and others has failed to establish. The representation of the four householders is naturally the fulcrum I refer to. Under Mr. Torrens' Act, the manifestation of public opinion even in detached bodies, and under the easiest conditions of union, will be sufficient, *if organised*, to bring about the reform desired. Moreover, the public opinion from which this Act will acquire its motive force, is that of the ^j* class most intimately and immediately interested in the statute's full and proper operation. How, therefore, to organize and economize this Public Opinion to the best interest of the State is the question which now most presses on us for solution, and though well aware of the difficulties which will necessarily arise in the destitute and populous districts where the Act should have freest course, I do not see that such difficulties are in any way insuperable. Even in the most neglected quarters of the metropolis a *small educated* section represented by the clergy of all denominations and others interested in the condition of the poor, will always be found to exist, and from them the nucleus of the reforming bodies, such as I desire to see established, must be at first composed. Hitherto, such persons have had no stronger forces at their command than good wishes and too often unrealised hopes. Now they have a quasi-official power to point out the disease and demand its cure. That the clergy and their co-operators would be better employed in such organization than on the multi-form machinery of petty clerical charities in shape of Penny Banks, etc., which now too often occupy their attention, is, to my mind, obvious enough. But it will be a difficult task to teach them the lesson. We are told that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," but in the regeneration of a poor district I am disposed to think that a clean house must precede a godly household. In the coming winter let our zealous and devoted East-end workers look to this matter.†

To make, however, such a power as I have indicated as extensively useful as possible, I would suggest in every parish or union, as convenience suggests, the formation of *Local Improvement Committees*, with the avowed object of carrying out in their entirety the compulsory provisions of any statute which Parliament may create for the benefit of those who have as yet neither the time nor energy to put them in force for themselves. By these committees all possible inquiry and suggestion in the direction

* See again, *per contra*, Dr. Rumsey's address before referred to.

† Finding temporary accommodation for the poor, dislodged under the provisions of Mr. Torrens' Act, or the constant demolitions necessitated by railways, etc., is a difficulty often suggested and hard to meet. An old sailor suggests to me that certain sailing ships in the Naval Reserve might be more profitably used for lodging the dispossessed poor, under proper industrial arrangements, than, as now, laying useless, if not rotting, at their moorings. Let our authorities consider this, and tow some of these vessels into the Thames at once.

of the required reform should be aroused and solicited, and if once the home interest of the informant as a labourer or workman was added to his common interest as a citizen and a Christian (now a difficult enough interest to develope in these classes, as all good men know) there would, I think, for a long time to come, be no lack of useful labours on which such committees should exercise themselves, and no lack of men to carry out the works which they might promote. I would suggest further that the area of operation for such committees should as far as possible be made coterminous with that of the Local Poor Law District. With respect to the constitution of these committees, there are various persons acting in the districts I now refer to, who would, I rejoice to think, willingly serve on them, and amongst such I may mention generally the Almoners of the Society for the Relief of Distress, the Deaconesses' Scripture Readers, and possibly the Relieving Officers, as *ex-officio* members, with others whose opportunities of observation and interest in the works to be enforced would prove of infinite value in the deliberations and action of such bodies.

The more immediate action of such committees would be, of course, to quicken the interest and urge on the representation of the householders, into whose hands the new power primarily falls, whilst added to this would naturally, under the plan as here set forth, be a regular attention to the registration of labour and the due application of it with advantage to the works in hand. In extension of this idea I hope the time is not far distant when there will be in every district, also having an area co-extensive with the Poor Law Districts, regularly constituted Charities' Committees, created on somewhat similar bases, and containing all the representatives of benevolent action throughout the district, such committees meeting regularly and acting as far as possible in co-operation and harmony with the Poor Law authorities. By some such means alone will the present reckless waste of alms, and consequent demoralizing and degradation of our poor in distressed districts be stayed, and the really deserving of our industrious poor properly relieved. This matter, however, does not fall directly within the limits of my subject now, and I must be content with the hint here thrown out of a much-needed piece of local machinery. It may be objected to me that the duties of such Boards would be too heavy to be long sustained by such volunteer officers as my scheme would create; but it is not to be forgotten that the Public Officers of Health will be primarily responsible as heretofore for the proper performance of the Act (see Sect. 12), and the continuous tacit supervision and control, which such a committee would exercise on the proper discharge of these officers' duties, would be one of the most useful, if less laborious, functions of these Boards. I contemplate considerations of ultimate economy would also, in my view of the case, go far to support the establishment and maintenance of these Local Improvement Committees. Improved dwellings and increased accommodation for the working poor, such as this Act provides, imply reduced poor-rates, fewer

gaols, and a diminishing police. On these aspects of the subject it is unnecessary to enlarge. They are sufficiently obvious to all. That such committees would have no strictly and recognized official character I am well aware, but the same may be said of all the voluntary associations which have hitherto directed their attention to other of our social ills, and in their time alleviated or removed them. Our military volunteer system is, on a large scale, an illustration of what may be accomplished by unpaid workers, and in a minor degree the countless charities which surround us on every side (especially at their commencement, when the real action of committees is allowed its freer scope), support the reasonable expectations of success for the system I advocate. In proposing, however, these Local Improvement Committees, I should suggest that with reference to the employment of labour, their action should be at least metropolitan if not general, though a natural priority of claim for employment might possibly be urged in behalf of those whose names might be on the Local Register, assuming such to exist, but the admission of any claim for work, would of course be conditional on the industrial competence of the applicant. I may add that all works executed under the provisions of Mr. Torrens' or similar Acts, would, I assume, be entrusted to the ordinary contractors and builders whom the local authorities might select, the undertaking of contracts by non-official bodies (such as the Local Improvement Committees I suggest) would of course be impossible. No interference therefore with the ordinary labour-market would be brought about by the adoption of my suggestions. The additional works brought into execution and the consequent additional demand for labourers created by such works would, however, obviously meet in many ways the wants of the unemployed, and with that aspect of the question, we are alone concerned. That a partial adaptation of the Local Registries in the supply of the necessary labourers, would be all that could be fairly anticipated is plain enough, for it is obvious that the want of employment might often arise in districts where works under compulsory clauses might not be required, and for this want the remedy of work afforded by such public undertakings, would of course be applied from any other quarter in which it then happened to be procurable. For such interchange and adjustment of labour, the registration system would again become available, whilst the variety of employments which such public works, as the Act now in consideration creates, would clearly necessitate the tabulation which a registry supplies.

That the wages of labour in some of its departments might be reduced by the operation of such committees, I am not prepared to deny, as a temporary possibility, but it must be remembered we are now only concerned with the industrious unemployed, offering no premium to incompetence, but simply replacing in the market such labourers as the circumstances of the age and country have temporarily thrown out of it, and to such men any fair remuneration for their labour, even if not up to the highest level of their former

earnings, would be acceptable, as the only available escape from pauperism. Such a plan as I have proposed, in my opinion, in no way interferes with the proper action of true political-economical laws, and upon that ground, quite as much as upon what seems to me its more purely economical advantages, I have here ventured to recommend it.

That the works created under these Acts would in course of years come to an end, is clear, but the period of their operation would, as it now appears to me, be quite sufficient to allow of many of the evils resultant on the growing masses of the unemployed, being palpably diminished, and also to admit of the leavening processes of education* sufficiently extending themselves to remove by their influence all pressing necessity for such or similar measures in the future. The advantages resultant from the mere industrial training afforded by these undertakings I have spoken of, with Mr. Arnold's experience, as my authority, elsewhere, and I need, therefore, only refer to them here. The arousing of local attention to the present necessities of the case, and the removal of that apathy which has so long characterized the class in whose interest improvements are most needed are the two primary conditions of success in the experiment proposed, and for this purpose the voluntary organization of Local Committees and the prospects of employment and independence to the poor concerned, form the most reasonable and natural securities. These securities, therefore, I have, by the plan propounded above, attempted to establish. As, however, it may reasonably be contended that the fullest operation of the "Labourers and Artizans Dwellings' Bill," and other similar Acts, will only afford employment, at the best, to a certain class of the distressed poor, such as bricklayers and similar orders of workmen, it remains for me to consider in what way the residuum of the industrious but unoccupied class with whom we have to do can be best provided for. That the natural and steady development of private enterprise should under ordinary circumstances be sufficient to meet all the necessities of the labour-market I readily admit, and in the cultivation of such a spirit amongst our great landowners and capitalists lies the chief remedy for the evils we complain of. At the same time, all schemes for public improvement and local or municipal reform cannot be too carefully studied and propounded at the present time by all persons who, without themselves possessing the necessary means for their accomplishment, have, nevertheless, the leisure to devise, and perhaps also the opportunity of promoting them. And with this belief I here venture to add a few more general suggestions for effectually, as I think, promoting the employment of workmen in casual distress. They are but scanty suggestions, but if they do nothing else they may at least open out to the consideration of reformers fields of labour which more careful study may extend. I

* For suggestions for a system of popular education in crowded and exceptional districts, see Appendix D.—"Compulsory Education," and "Plan of 'Street Schools' for East London." Letters of "E. W. H." and Author in *Daily News*.

remarked at the outset, that the very existence of the casual-labourer class is a great social difficulty in itself, and with the constant liability to be called away at any moment to his *most* usual form of employment, the supply of any extra-casual labour to the *intermittent* workman, if I may for the moment make use of such a term, is rendered greatly more embarrassing. I hope, however, the time may arrive when, by emigration* and other social safety-valves, the population and labour in this country may be sufficiently well balanced to bring about the great reduction, if not entire, extinction of the purely "casual" class, leaving, then, the idle no excuse for his idleness, and the improvident destitute no ground for complaint. Meanwhile we must be content to devise the best palliatives which present circumstances admit of, and amongst these I now recommend the following which occur to myself as practicable and easy of immediate adoption.

In the first place, then, and in view of the increasing† vagrancy which Poor Law Reports too clearly establish, I would advise the earliest possible construction, by the unemployed of *Uniform* Casual Wards throughout the length and breadth of the country—at present, the want of uniformity in these institutions, where they exist at all, has a direct tendency to multiply vagrants and increase imposture. In my opinion, therefore, the construction of such places in all our Poor Law Districts would be a public boon of infinite value, and it is needless to point out the amount of labour, much of it of an unskilled order, which such an undertaking would involve. The collecting and carriage of materials for their work would alone afford occupation to a large section of the now unemployed poor, whilst the mere industrial training under properly constituted labour-masters, as before pointed out, would supply to many an education which they would never otherwise obtain. The desirability of such an addition to our Poor Law machinery has already been suggested and recommended by the authorities themselves, I am therefore here proposing no revolutionary scheme, and, furthermore, believe, on economical grounds, that the immediate expenditure, whether through national or local rating, which is involved in the process, would be amply repaid, both to the nation and individuals, before many years had elapsed from its trial. In furtherance of this subsidiary scheme for the employment of our casual poor, I would again urge the necessity and economy of the registration system, elsewhere developed in this paper, as being

* The necessity for some recognised and reliable source of information on the subject of emigration is daily more and more felt amongst us. What assistance the Government Emigration Office, having its establishment in Park Street, Westminster, may afford, I cannot clearly ascertain, but the present desultory and disconnected appliances for informing emigrants which lie about us on every side, are sorely in need of improvement and amalgamation, and before long I trust the whole subject may be made matter of serious Imperial consideration. For a few suggestions on the subject of *Emigration* from Eastern London, see Appendix B.

† In support of this fact see the daily papers *passim*, and on the "Spread of Vagrancy in Scotland." *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 28, 1868.

essential to its complete success. Its adaptation here is sufficiently intelligible without further explanations on my part.

Since writing the above paragraphs I have been led to understand that a national memorial to the late Lord Brougham is contemplated by some who have the best means of seeing so good an idea well carried out. If this be so, how could the life and labours of that great man be better commemorated than by the united energies and toil of the unemployed classes of this country? Such an occupation for the distressed poor of our great city would commend itself to all, and be better than all the thousands of pounds now squandered in almsgiving by a zealous but misguided philanthropy. A Central Workmen's Hall and Free Library, open to all, and endowed for ever, would, perhaps, be the best form such a monument could assume—but this is matter for others to determine. Meanwhile, I am contented to have made the general suggestion in this place.

II. Another and that also a very extensive field of labour might be opened to the unemployed in the direction of our Municipal and National Drainage and Sewerage Works. Hitherto the system of sewerage adopted in most of our large towns and elsewhere has been generally confessed to be wasteful and extravagant in the extreme, and the amount of valuable manure thus lost to the agricultural portion of the community is everywhere confessed.* The recent adaptation or invention of the so-called "Dry Earth System" by Mr. Moule, and its extensive and most successful application in India and elsewhere, seems to point out alike a remedy for this extravagance, and a wide sphere of occupation for the most unskilled members of the unemployed class.

Assuming, then, the general adoption of Mr. Moule's system in London and elsewhere, the necessary collection of earth, and the constant supply and removal of the same in carrying it out, would obviously at once furnish remunerative occupation to thousands of our Metropolitan and City poor, whilst in addition to the more immediately created staff for the supply and removal of the earth, the machinery and further staff which the enormous manure works resultant would involve, might again provide an extensive and profitable industry for other sections of the same class. That the manure manufactured under Mr. Moule's system is already a valuable marketable commodity is, I believe, admitted, and when once the prejudices of long continued habit have given place to a recognition of the real interests which the adoption of the new method will

* By a strange coincidence Mr. Bailey Denton, in a recent number of the *Daily News* (September 18), printed after the writing of this paper, has most strongly advocated the adoption of the earth-closet system, as a means of improving the condition and increasing the resources of our agricultural labourers. He further suggests in the same place, the appointment of public scavengers for carrying out the system—a form of employment precisely similar to that recommended in this paper, and obviously capable of affording occupation to a large body of persons. I therefore thank Mr. Bailey for the confirmatory evidence which his experience affords in support of my own views. See also article on "Earth Conservancy at Dover Castle" in *Lancet*, October 31, 1868.

promote, I have little reason to doubt that the thorough elaboration and extension of the process indicated would lead to the most profitable results. I may add that all details affecting the real merits and general feasibility of Mr. Moule's system can be obtained in the prospectus and occasional publications of the Company which has undertaken (already with considerable success) the carrying out of the patent involved in it. I have not thought it necessary to enter here into any statistical calculations on the numbers of workmen which the adoption of this suggestion would employ; it is, however, obvious enough that the continual necessities of every household in the land, in this respect, would demand the services of a body of men at least equal to, if not greater than that already engaged in the analogous occupation of removing the dust and rubbish from our towns. That the carrying out of this scheme would be sufficiently remunerative to attract the attention of private capitalists, I, in my own mind, entertain little doubt, but in default of such private enterprise, I would suggest the immediate recommendation and execution of Mr. Moule's system by the various municipal bodies throughout the country. That an ample compensation would be provided in the profits of the manure, and, indirectly, relief afforded to local rates by employment of the poor in this way, I thoroughly believe, but have not space to prove or enlarge on here. Meanwhile I offer this second suggestion for the consideration of our national economists, adding at the same time this further fact in its favour, that its adoption will at once create an *entirely new* field of employment, and not to a very large extent, as is too often the case in the promotion of new inventions, by establishing a new class of labourers, dislodge and impoverish others hitherto profitably engaged on the superseded methods.

III. My *third* recommendation is one of a much less extensive nature, and has, in all probability, been made by others before me, but as a contribution to the stock of suggestions available for our public authorities, may be worth subjoining here. My recommendation is that the duties of street crossing-sweepers, now undertaken, and too often without any public demand for them, by the lowest class of our vagrant poor, should in future be entrusted to proper and accredited servants of the parish or Union in which such crossings are situated.

The necessity or desirability of establishing such recognized crossings might fairly be left to the consideration of the Vestries or Local Boards, or in the event of these bodies not taking cognizance of the smaller local wants in the matter, the representation of four householders (to adopt Mr. Torrens' provision for other purposes) living in the immediate neighbourhood, might be sufficient primary authority for the appointment of such a registered sweeper as my suggestion contemplates. It will be observed that in the furtherance of this suggestion again, my before-proposed system of registration might be rendered most serviceable, and in consideration of the light duties which such posts involve, and the slight physical capacities which their discharge demands, only a particular class of the

unemployed poor, and consisting of the otherwise incapacitated and weakly, might be considered eligible for the service. The remuneration of these persons might, as heretofore, rest with the generous public, or, if the service was properly organized might be supplied, and we think ungrudgingly, out of the Local Rates, and in the latter case I would suggest that the functions of a Commissionaire might in many instances under certain conditions, be added to those of the ordinary crossing-sweeper. The convenience to the public of such a class properly supervised and drilled, considering the present limited supply of the ordinary commissionaire, would, I think, be undeniable; whilst the employment it would furnish to a really deserving class, now only supported by precarious alms, together with the indirect check thus necessarily afforded to the most insidious form of mendicancy, make its establishment, in my opinion, a matter of public importance and benefit. All vested interests, if I may use such a term in such a matter, would of course be respected by the authorities in a new distribution of sweepings.

With respect to the action of this scheme on mendicity and vagrancy, I would suggest that statutory provision might be made, that any person not duly registered as a sweeper and found after a stated period, say a fortnight's idleness, engaged in street sweeping in any place not recognised by the local authorities, should be treated as a vagrant and punished accordingly. The mischief now occasioned to many of our poorer class, and especially children, by the present indeterminate, unrecognised system of crossing-sweepings, is almost incalculable, and in some places hardly a corner of our streets is free from some noisy and insolent representative of this class, who with the threadbare pretence of service rendered to the public, demands his pence with all the importunity of the most accomplished beggar. All this might be abolished by the adoption of some such system of registered sweepers as I have recommended, and to our parochial authorities especially its execution belongs.* Any agitation from the outside, such as the publication of these and similar suggestions may promote, may, however, quicken vestries into more immediate action, and with this hope I have dwelt at some length on this third and minor recommendation.† That many other local improvements, suitable for execution under a similar system of registered labour will occur to other minds, I have no doubt, but doubtless we have, in the multiplication of such improvements, a proportionate increase of rates or taxes which,

* For a more elaborate development of the author's views on the employment of the better class of poor, temporarily reduced to parish relief and the "stone-yard," see letter in *Morning Star*, January 23, 1868, and *Standard*, January 16, 1868. Appendix D.

† In June 1869, the further portion of Mr. Peabody's magnificent gift for the London Poor will be at the disposal of the trustees—a sum amounting to £100,000. Would it be inconsistent with the conditions of the trust to apply this through the assistant agencies of the Local Improvement Committees, before suggested, to the restoration and purchase of workmen's dwellings in London under Mr. Torrens' Act? Without pulling down the old, it is useless, in my opinion, to pile up new and palatial dwellings for the poor.

in the present attitude of the public mind on the subject, would offer almost insuperable obstacles to their accomplishment. I therefore forbear to treat in any further details this branch of the subject. At the same time I would express an opinion that not the least useful of lessons for our vestries to learn is that a wise expenditure * is often the best economy, and in support of this view from another aspect, I have only to point to the miserable results which official niggardleness has too often brought about in our Poor Law and other departments of the Local Administration.

I have now only to sum up the suggestions contained in this paper on the subject proposed for consideration, and to add a few words on the way in which these and similar suggestions are most likely to be adopted, with reasonable chances of success. In the first place then, I recommend the construction of some machinery by which the thorough classification and recognition of the various sections of our poorer classes may be established, before attempting to relieve or employ them. And for this purpose, I think that a system of local, district, and, if possible, national registration of labour should be instituted. Such a system of registration for the present I propose to be grafted on, as far as possible, to the existing framework of the Post Office service, especially as developed in the Savings Bank and Insurance Departments of that office. Side by side with this system of registration for the really industrious but unemployed class, I would recommend a most † careful classification on the part of the Poor Law Authorities of all persons coming under their operations. By this means the residuum of the industrious unemployed, separated from the stratum of pure pauperism, might be placed under the best conditions for returning as soon as possible to labour and re-assuming their proper position amongst the industrial ranks of the community, whilst the idle and incompetent would be left to the necessarily sterner discipline of an efficient Poor Law, by which the greatest possible labour obtainable from them would be demanded for the least possible wage consistent with the health of the pauper. Having by these means, therefore, separated the really deserving and unemployed poor from the idle and incompetent, I recommend the distribution and employment of the better class of the former on all public works of utility, created by any existing or future compulsory clauses in Acts of Parliament. The indication and promotion of such works would be at first entrusted to *Local Improvement Committees*, composed as far as possible of representative and public spirited men, acting in the first entrance in a volunteer capacity, but hereafter if possible to be clothed with such official authority as the State may think fit to extend to them. I have further suggested that the execution of these public works with

* Recent proceedings in reference to the St. Pancras Board of Guardians, and their liberal expenditure for a time with the opposition it has awakened in the minds of the rate-payers are worth examining on this point. See Daily Papers, *passim*.

† For development of this idea, see Author's letter to the *Times*, January 9, 1868. Appendix C.

other subsidiary measures, will, if properly encouraged and energetically pursued, afford sufficient occupation for our unemployed poor, until such times as the more permanent and general remedies which the progress of society brings with it, have acquired the strength to supersede such temporary palliatives. Meanwhile, and as a few subsidiary methods of meeting the acknowledged wants of the unemployed, I have suggested (1st) the construction of casual wards on a uniform plan, and accommodated to the wants of the various districts, throughout the length and breadth of the land, and this suggestion, it is contended, is based on the best principles of economy and national policy, both for the suppression of crime and the maintenance of industry. The national monument to Lord Brougham, also finds a place in this part of my scheme, and that liberal public subscriptions for such a purpose would be forthcoming this winter in place of our usual indiscriminate almsgiving to the unemployed there is little reason for doubt. (2nd). The adoption and development of the dry-earth system of sewerage in town and country, affording as it would employment to thousands, and multiplying the fertilising resources of the country at large. And (3rd) I have recommended the establishment primarily, in the metropolis and elsewhere, if circumstances demand it, of a properly registered staff of crossing-sweepers and district commissioners, the latter class to be recruited as far as possible from the better educated but invalided section of the unemployed poor. I may add the more perfect registration of employment of scavengers under this head. The above are the main recommendations which this paper contains, others of a collateral description might have been added, but will readily suggest themselves to any persons who may be disposed to follow me *generally* in the propositions I have made. Such recommendations are, I am well aware, but a very slender contribution towards the study of a great and most urgent question. To be of any true service they must be supplemented by the thoughts, sympathies, and willing action of those in whose hands the real reformation of society lies. From a new Parliament and the early energies of young legislators much may be expected in the direction of those improvements which I have now but faintly indicated. National education, protected co-operation amongst working men, and a properly organised system of emigration are among the first boons we may expect at their hands ; but it is in the steady development of sober and industrious habits amongst the operative classes themselves, and in the true patriotism which urges every man to do his best for the common weal that the ultimate triumph must be looked for. The closer union of all classes, the diminution of crime, * the repression of drunkenness, and a thousand other lesser victories have to be won before the campaign is accomplished. I have as it were but planted a flag or two in the direction in which I believe this final victory lies, to other and to stronger hands must be committed that

* On the connection of intemperance and pauperism, I republish, in Appendix F. a valuable letter in *Times* of January 15, 1868.

organisation and command which will alone carry us to the desired end. With such I most hopefully leave this great question and all the important issues that it involves.

APPENDIX. A.

CHARITY AND THE POOR LAWS.

THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE RELIEF COMMITTEE IN EAST LONDON AND ITS RELATION TO THE POOR LAW.

Letter from the Author to the *Standard*, February 11th, 1868.

SIR,—The remarks of your correspondent, writing in to-day's paper on East-end distress and the proposed operations of the Central Committee in their relations to the administration of the Poor Law, are, as it seems to me, most valuable, and deserving of even more amplification than his article afforded space to develop. If it be made a primary principle of the Central Committee's operations, or of any other Committee, that no relief* shall be afforded through its machinery to any persons in receipt of relief from the parish, surely the day for all thorough and satisfactory reform of our Poor Law is indefinitely postponed.

The one great object that we have before us in the solution of present difficulties at the East-end is how to render the administration of our Poor Law as complete and comprehensive as possible. If, therefore, we start with the assumption of a large distressed class, who are either too proud, or in a certain degree too well off, to make application to the Board, we are clearly continuing, if not creating, the lamentable necessity of a large and necessarily uncertain system of supplemental machinery by the side, if not in the place of, a properly constituted State organisation. This supplemental machinery, once constructed and made use of by the distressed poor, will with difficulty be hereafter supplanted by more efficient Poor Law operations.

All who have any experience of the poor know the prevalence of that seemingly reasonable but truly false logic by which many distressed persons declare themselves too proud to accept assistance from the parish, but by no means unwilling to take any amount of alms from the first though unknown visitor who makes his appearance amongst them.

This false logic, one of the chief stumbling-blocks in the way of all almoners, will now, by the proposed action of the Central Committee, be increased and intensified. Assuredly this is no desirable result in the direction of reform.

It is, as your correspondent so clearly states, admitted on all

* These remarks were evoked by a Resolution of the Central Executive Relief Committee, as stated in the text.

hands that the out-door relief at the East-end is painfully inadequate, and, notwithstanding the increase and uniformity now suggested and partially enforced by Mr. Corbett, must continue so as long as the equalisation of rates is postponed. This being so, the recognition of the fact is fairly within the scope of the Central Executive Committee, and a determination to send all cases for primary investigation at the hands of the Guardians, with power of supplementing the slender relief now, under existing circumstances, afforded out of the rates, would, in the end, materially strengthen the hands of the law and hasten an improvement in its administration for the future.

The real root of all evil in the present anomalous working of our Poor Law is the want of proper discrimination in the treatment of our paupers. Whether this is to be cured, as I have suggested elsewhere,* by a system of first, second, and third class certificates, awarded as in bankruptcy, according to the merits of the case, with relief up to a certain point, proportioned to the necessity of the applicant, or by some other machinery to be hereafter proposed, I cannot say. Meanwhile the only practical method of promoting the discrimination required is, *in the first instance*, to place *all* distressed persons under the operations of the Poor Law.

For a time aid might perhaps be fairly afforded by the Central Committee, or other charitable body, to that class of persons who from competence and ease have in the present crisis been reduced in their means to the level of the highest out-door relief afforded by the parish—such persons under the circumstances forming an exceptional body, and having obviously no claim upon the rates. And I would further suggest that any supplemental aid given in view of the present acknowledged inadequacy of out-door relief might be endorsed by the officer of the Committee on the ticket which is or ought to be furnished by the relieving officer to all persons in receipt of such parish relief. By this means all accumulative and indiscriminate charity would be prevented, and the Poor Law authorities would be primarily responsible for the relief afforded, as well as subsequently acquainted with all contributions given in aid.

One good which would result from the discrimination in relief, now so much needed, would be an acknowledgment of the fact that there is a large semi-criminal stratum of pauperism which, under existing circumstances, when respectable and vicious have all the same scanty dole, is barely recognised, or, if so recognised, by no means sifted with the severity it deserves. As a matter of simple justice to ratepayers, hard fare, if not penal tasks, should be imposed on men who do as little as they can in a parish stone-yard though professing to starve, and sell the workhouse bread for the drams of the nearest tavern. That there is a great host of these incorrigibles no one will deny. A discriminating machinery for relief can alone detect them, and give them their due.

* See Author's letter to *Times*, January 9, 1868, Appendix C.

Meanwhile, I submit again that the proposed rule of the Central Committee in the matter of out-door relief, and their independence of the workhouse poor must, if carried out, indefinitely postpone the discrimination which can alone render our Poor Law universal, and sufficient for the necessities of all the distressed.

LETTER FROM "EAST-END INCUMBENT" (THE REV. H. M. M'GILL),
Times, December 27, 1864.

PRIVATE CHARITY AND THE POOR-LAW.

SIR,—The question with which your leading article of this day concludes, "Why does the Poor Law leave its work to be done over again by private hands?" * is one which demands especial attention, at a time when the claims upon the resources of the charitable are so numerous and pressing, as your columns shew. People may well inquire how it is that the £750,000 annually raised in London for the relief of the poor fails to accomplish its object, and how it is that so many thousand persons are thrown in the winter season on the casual charity of refuges and other kindred institutions.

Perhaps you will allow me briefly to state some of the causes which appear to me to have led to this state of things ?

The first and chief, if not the only cause, is the decided antipathy which exists on the minds of the poor to have recourse to the parish authorities at all, and especially to enter the walls of the workhouse. I have had an extensive experience of the feelings of the poorer classes, both in the country and in London, and there is nothing which I have found so universally prevalent among them as a horror and dislike of the so-called "bastille," or Union-house. An inmate of such an abode is, in the eyes of the decent poor, a fellow-creature, and to be a "workhouse brat" is regarded as a degradation. Now, there must be some substantial reason for this antipathy, otherwise it would never be so deep-rooted and so wide-spread as it is. If we can trace its origin and prevent its continuance we shall stop that preference which many now entertain of dying of starvation in their wretched homes, or even in the streets of London, rather than darken the door of the workhouse.

It appears to me that this dislike of the workhouse flows from two distinct sources—one originating in the poor themselves, the other in the system on which the house is regulated. A simple every-day example will illustrate what I mean. Let us take the case of a widow with three or four children, left penniless by the death of her husband, a dock labourer perhaps, or a costermonger earning a precarious livelihood in the streets. Her support is gone, and she applies to the relieving officer for assistance. In most of the poorer

* The same question will doubtless be asked with the same force in the present winter, and, in view of this certainty, I venture to reprint here an "East-end Incumbent's" Letter.

The views expressed in the above letter are so sound that they cannot be too widely circulated again.—A. H. H.

parishes the rule is to allow about 5s. per week in such a case. She finds that she cannot live upon that wretched pittance, and applies for an increased allowance ; the request is refused, and she is compelled, sorely against her will, to become an in-door pauper. As soon as she is admitted her children are taken from her, and she is placed in the receiving ward for a few days, very likely in company with some persons of abandoned character, whose bearing and language are often sufficient to outrage the feelings of any one who has lived a respectable life. She is afterwards removed to the common workroom, and made to pick oakum—not a very elevating employment—in the society of persons whose conduct is such as to lower her moral tone, and make her long even for the poverty-stricken freedom which she has lost. All sorts of tempers have to be borne with, all sorts of language to be listened to, till the heart is almost broken, and the spirits are weighed down with misery. The hatred of the workhouse is thus fortified and strengthened by the conduct of the poor themselves.

But the chief cause of it, after all, is the mode in which the workhouse is, in accordance with the law, usually managed. It is to all intents and purposes a kind of prison. There is no exit allowed, except about once in three months for a solitary holiday. Few under the age of sixty years are allowed to go out on the Sunday, and all are liable to be searched both when they go out and when they return. The children are separated from their parents, and the parents from the children. All are subjected to an iron rule very different from that “charity which thinketh no evil.”* If the settlement of an inmate is doubtful, every effort is made to remove him to his legal parish, wherever that may be. He may be passed to the Land’s End or to Ireland ; to some place where he knows no one and no one knows him. It is true that there is always the option of taking his discharge, which means in many cases, especially in the winter months, running the risk of starvation. And this being the case, can we be surprised that the Poor Law leaves its work to be done by private hands ? I think not. Its principles are too harsh even to be acceptable to the poor ; its code is too rigorous even to relieve the most deserving, and till this is modified the evils which we now deplore will undoubtedly continue.

But what is the remedy ? “Greater union and a more comprehensive system ; greater discrimination and delicacy in the treatment of the in-door poor, and a considerable extension of out-door relief. It is in London that the weakness of the present law is chiefly seen, and this arises from the fact that it is the direct pecuniary interest of each board of guardians to throw the burdens of the poor from their own shoulders to those of others. Let this be remedied by equalising the rate over the whole metropolitan area, and then we should not hear of the refusals to admit the destitute into the houses provided for their accommodation in the wholesale way that we now do. Let the respectable poor be dealt

* This has, I think, been somewhat modified of late.—A. H. H.

with more liberally and kindly than the profligate and vicious, and let those who can by honest means contribute to their own support out of doors be more generously aided in their efforts. Let the workhouse be deprived of its prison-like character, and then we shall find that, though the necessity for charitable appeals will not be utterly put aside, it will be materially diminished, and private hands will not be left to do that essential work which the law of the land has left undone.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

AN EAST-END INCUMBENT.

December, 24.

APPENDIX. B.

EMIGRATION FROM THE EAST OF LONDON.

Letter of Author in *Standard*, May 21st, 1868.

SIR,—Your leading article of to-day, on the petition presented by the distressed operatives to the Poplar Guardians, asking for assistance out of the rates for purposes of emigration, once more calls attention to the most important question of emigration generally and its practicability as an engine of relief.

The necessities of the poor in East London are even in this season undenied. The probable recurrence of last winter's misery, and the sensational philanthropy which it evoked* may therefore again be looked for. Whilst the summer is with us, can no machinery for relief be devised?† In the stress of the storm there is little time or material for constructing the lifeboat. Now, a thoroughly organized system of labour registration, and the promotion of a sound plan of emigration, seem amongst the most available lifeboats we can devise. The former will see that the home market for labour is properly adjusted ; the latter will, in a measure, provide for the surplus labourers, of which, say what others may, there is always a formidable army in Eastern London, and elsewhere.

The powers of the guardians for promoting emigration are well known, and have been before explained in your columns. A spirit of economy, wise or unwise I will not say which, prevents the exercise of these powers. Cannot this spirit be fairly met and overcome? It is admitted that labour is required in Canada, and that wages are good.‡ The same may be said of other colonies.

I would ask, then, cannot some arrangement be made through agents in such colonies by which a system of emigration could be started on loans provided by the Guardians, such loans to be repaid

* This prophecy is already fulfilled. November, 1868.

† None such has been constructed. November, 1868.—A. H. H.

‡ See Letters from Mr. W. F. Lynn in *Beehive*, November 7 and 21st, 1868, again strongly confirming this view. By recent advices from Canada we learn that the whole question of immigration to that dominion is about to be considered by the Government, and proper arrangements made for the introduction and well-being of future emigrants. See *Canadian News*.

by an agreed-upon deduction of wage on arrival in the colony ? This repayment would be secured by the government agents. An arrangement for receiving from the applicants for emigration small weekly payments up to the necessary amounts for taking them out, might also perhaps be worth consideration.

Under any circumstances, and assuming the colonial agencies, duly accredited by government, to be established, surely the experiment of emigration by the loan system might be made on a picked body of men, such as the East-end Emigration Committee * could, no doubt, readily supply.

† I would venture to add that in the face of the tremendous problem in Eastern London the application of some part, if not all, the large surplus fund of the Lancashire relief subscriptions, for purposes of emigration might be fairly suggested for the approval of subscribers and the public. Surely a wider and more lasting benefit to the poor could not be furnished in any other way.

APPENDIX C.

CLASSIFICATION OF PAUPERS.

Extract from letter of Author in *Times*, January 9, 1868.

SIR,—Your notice in The *Times* of to-day on the “Distress in the East-end” will, I am sure, be read and appreciated by thousands really interested in the welfare of the vast population of which it treats. Will you allow me as an almoner of the Society for the Relief of Distress, with some considerable experience of East-end poverty, to heartily endorse the sentiments expressed in your article, and also to offer one or two simple suggestions, by the carrying out of which I think some of the more obvious evils in the present method of administering relief would be reduced, if not altogether removed ?† In the first place I would suggest that in view of such exceptional distress as now seems to prevail in East London, a system of special relieving officers, properly accredited by the Local Board of Guardians, might be adopted, and I feel confident that many competent gentlemen would be only too willing to offer their services in such a capacity in the present emergency. Such persons, as supplementary to the regular staff of relieving officers of the parish, might investigate a vast number of cases, reporting them to the Board, and so materially abridge and at the same time strengthen the labours of the Guardians. My second suggestion would, perhaps, be more difficult to carry out without the direct sanction of Parliament, but I am disposed to think must ultimately, in some form or other, be adopted. § What I allude to is a systematic classification of the

* This Committee still continues its useful labours.

† Since this was written the Fund has, I believe, been otherwise applied.

‡ The same difficulties being likely to occur this winter I venture to suggest my old recipes again. November, 1868.

§ In support of this, see “East-end Incumbent’s” Letter, Appendix A.

applicants for relief. Why not then, I would ask, as in the case of bankruptcy (and after all pauperism when considered is but social bankruptcy), grant, after a careful investigation of each case, a first, second, or third class certificate, according to the merits of each applicant. If misfortune and unavoidable causes should be the sources of distress, let a first-class certificate and liberal out-door relief be awarded; if simple improvidence be the source, let a second-class certificate be granted and a scantier allowance made; if, on the other hand, vice and wrong-doing are proved to be the sources, let a third class certificate only be awarded, with the workhouse and hard labour to the utmost of the pauper's powers rigidly enforced. By such a system of certificates, duly registered in the workhouse books, the labours of the Guardians in cases of renewed applications for relief would be materially diminished, while the production of the first and second class certificates to the volunteer almoner, who might fairly be called in to supplement parish relief, but not to precede it, would afford sufficient testimonies of respectability, without the necessity of a lengthened investigation. I assume that in all cases the pauper would himself be furnished with these certificates, properly dated and signed, so that the absence of such certificate would be an indication that he had either not made application to the Board, or that his claim for relief had been disallowed.

APPENDIX D.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND LONDON PAUPERISM.*

Letter from Mr. E. W. Hollond in *Daily News*, January 23, 1868.

SIR,—Whilst the proceedings of the Manchester conference are being watched with the most intense interest by all those, of every shade of opinion, who have the permanent welfare of the lowest classes most at heart, it is rather discouraging to observe the signs of an obstructive reaction, which those proceedings have already called forth. The favourite form which this reaction has taken is somewhat singular, on a subject on which so many preliminary terms have to be defined, and so much can be said both *pro* and *con*. Instead of bringing forward arguments built on expediency, practicability, justice, and perhaps liberty, the opponents of compulsory education seem to imagine that they are able to set the question at rest, and to make all further discussion of the subject unnecessary, by the mere enumeration of all the grand results in the way of education that have been already achieved. The *Times* has a leader which, after recapitulating the glorious efforts of the past, apparently recommends a policy of *laissez-aller* for the future. No one, of course, can despise what has been done, but the question

* I have ventured here to insert a valuable letter from my friend "E. W. H." (Mr. E. W. Hollond) to the *Daily News*, January 23, 1868, and my own reply thereto containing a Scheme of "Street Schools" for Eastern London.

cannot fail to recur to the mind as one reads these comfortable assurances. Do the efforts already made, and the results already obtained, really justify the encomiums bestowed upon them? Statistics have been brought forward to shew that there are whole classes of the community left almost entirely without the rudiments of education. We are told that these statistics are incorrect. Very likely this is true; but the question cannot rest here. It matters not whether in whole districts of the metropolis more than 80 per cent. of the growing population are being brought up without sufficient education to enable them to earn a decent livelihood in after life, or whether the number is 70 per cent., or 50 per cent. We have the great, staring, palpable fact, that London destitution, in other words, London pauperism, is increasing at a rate which is beginning to alarm the whole kingdom; and we have the opinion of all those who know anything about the matter that want of instruction—industrial, moral, and religious—is at the root of the evil. This being so, it is worse than trifling to attempt to argue down the question by merely proving that some of the figures advanced are inaccurate. The prospect for educational reform certainly does not look cheering. The fact is that satisfactory results will never be obtained until we procure an admission for the great truth that education is as necessary for the purpose of keeping body and soul together as food and clothing. How far we are as yet from the acknowledgement of this proposition is made painfully evident by the conclusion arrived at by the Parliamentary Committee which sat on the Poor Laws as lately as 1864, viz., that “the proposal of the Educational Commissioners to compel guardians to insist upon the education of the child as a condition of out-door relief to the parent is inconsistent with the principles upon which the relief of the poor is established.” The guardians are now empowered to make provision for such education; but how far are such powers exercised? The *Saturday Review*, after favouring us with an educational *résumé*, written in very much the same spirit as that in the *Times*, does indeed inform us most complacently that we have arrived at such a state of perfection that “even boards of guardians have been long in the habit of making the attendance of the children of those they assist at school a condition of their out-door relief.” Whether your contemporary means in this curiously involved sentence to assert that all boards of guardians, or the majority, or some, or only a few of them have been accustomed to distribute that out-door relief upon these conditions, does not clearly appear. But at all events, as far as the metropolis is concerned, it is indeed news to hear that matters are so arranged. Would that the news were true! It is clear that ratepayers could exercise no greater wisdom or more true economy than to insist upon, and even where necessary to pay for, the education of the children of their out-door poor. It is only by adopting some means to insure the education of the young that we can expect to stem the tide of pauperism, and ultimately to effect a reduction in the rates. It is almost impossible to estimate to what extent the ranks of pauperism are swelled by the unfed, unclothed,

and uneducated children of the out-door poor. The hereditary character of pauperism is proverbial, and it is to the everlasting disgrace of the Poor Law administration that it is so.

There are very good grounds for supposing that any system of compulsory education to be successful must be introduced step by step, and by making certain classes whose position is exceptional subject to the provisions, the benefits of which should be gradually extended to the whole community. The Factory Acts, and the various extensions of the Factory Acts, have all been advances in the right direction. The recipients of out-door relief are a class which presents perhaps the most favourable subject for the next application of the principle of compulsion. All the really important objections which have reference to the individual right of the parent to make use of the labour of the child, in cases at all events of necessity, are in their case inapplicable, the right of the ratepayers to insist upon such conditions as may protect themselves having an indisputable and an anterior claim.—I am, &c.,

Temple, Jan. 21.

E. W. H.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

Letter of the Author to the *Daily News*, January 25, 1868.

SIR,—The letter of “E. W. H.” published in your paper yesterday on the subject of “Compulsory Education and London Pauperism,” must, I think, be considered by all who have any knowledge of, or interest in, the great question involved, as a timely and valuable contribution to the materials from which a sound and decisive judgment must ultimately be derived. Of the intimate connection which exists between ignorance and pauperism, there can be but little doubt in the minds of all reasonable men; and as this matter has been so plainly put before your readers in “E. W. H.’s” letter I do not propose to enlarge upon it here. I may simply state that my own experience, extending now for several years in some of the poorest and most benighted districts of London, entirely confirms all that your correspondent has stated in that respect. There remain, however, several questions opened out by the communication of “E. W. H.” upon which, in consideration of their great and growing importance, you will perhaps allow me to say a few words. And, first, assuming the gradual method of compulsion as indicated by the writer, with attendance at school made, as I presume “E. W. H.” intended, a condition precedent of our-door relief, I would ask how far such a system could be made applicable to the more densely populated districts of London and other large cities: and, in conclusion, attempt to point out what seem to me essentials of any satisfactory scheme to meet the difficulties involved. To compel attendance at school under existing circumstances in some of the worst parts of London (with which I am myself acquainted), where almost every room shelters a half-ragged family, and where, consequently, the population of a street is often equal to that of a large country village, would, I

believe, prove a task beyond the compass of the whole army of special constables now for the moment enrolled, much more then that of the limited staff of school officials which even the most liberal education rate would supply. Indeed, as things appear to me, personal persuasion, though difficult enough to force upon an ignorant mind, would in the end be far stronger than compulsion of law ; and the educational crusade, for such it is, which now lies before us, must be conducted by a Peter the Hermit, rather than by the supposed omnipresent Policeman X. To beat down and annihilate the excuses which are now made, and in some cases not without some element of reason, for the non-attendance of children at school, must be the first of our duties, and of these the principal will, I think, be found to be, distance from school and loss of wage. Other minor excuses in poor quarters are, of course, want of clothes, want of money, and not unfrequently, I may add, want of information, as to the very existence of schools and the manner of joining them. Now, the two principal difficulties can only be met by the multiplication of schools on a less expensive scale than those at present existing with the addition of some species of compensation, of which I will add a word hereafter.

The minor excuses to which I have briefly alluded would best be set aside by the explanation and vigilant recruiting of the local district visitors.

No small evil resultant on the present system of schools is the size of the classes and the limited supply of teachers. By the institution of smaller schools, and the supply of an intelligent, but not too highly trained body of teachers, this evil might clearly be diminished. I have long devised, and elsewhere *promulgated*, the scheme of what, for want of a better term, I would call *Street Schools*; such places of instruction to be distributed at short distances over the area of all our larger parishes, to be supplied with teachers capable of giving instruction in the merest elements of learning, and furnishing accommodation for some 25 or 30 children at the most. Such schools would, to some extent, correspond with those of the old dames' system, whilst securing more intelligent instruction, and there would, I consider, be little difficulty in securing sufficiently qualified teachers for a very small consideration. Moreover, should such a scheme be adopted, these schools would insure individual attention to the pupils, which seems acknowledged on all hands to be the prevailing want of all our large existing establishments. At best a sort of regimental discipline and roll-call reading, utterly devoid of all intelligent apprehension on the part of the pupils, is all that in nine cases out of ten is now attained in our ragged and poorer schools. This conclusion, I may add, I have arrived at, not without some careful experience and investigation. With respect to the necessary accommodation for these schools I now suggest, such for temporary purposes might I think be found in the ground-floor rooms of many East-end houses, some of which are already so used by the few surviving representatives of the schoolmistress dames, who still con-

tinue to take in pupils on their own account, at 2d. or 3d. a week. Moreover, the use of Churches and Chapels for similar purposes during the week would, in my opinion, be no desecration. My scheme of street schools is, of course, but given in outline here, but the details will, I think, readily suggest themselves, and are, of course, matters not necessary to dwell on now. I assume that such schools would afford instruction gratis, as it is difficult to see how any form of even half-compulsory education could be based on any other than a gratuitous footing. Now, with respect to compensation, a matter alluded to in a letter by Mr. Biddell in reference to the agricultural labourer, and commented on in your columns yesterday, the difficulty is probably not so great in town as in country districts. Nevertheless, in large families, where "every little" in the false and short-sighted economy of ignorant parents is supposed to "help," this is a question the consideration of which cannot be entirely neglected. Only yesterday I visited a family of six, where the eldest, at the age of 12, with the smallest possible elements of knowledge, gained after irregular attendance at lessons, had been sent away from school to earn "sixpence a week and her victuals," and this I feel assured was no exceptional case. In the face of such a fact loss of contribution to the family stock cannot be denied; but a judicious system of reward, in money or otherwise, held out to successful pupils, and perhaps in some cases a slight mid-day meal provided at the school, might afford a sufficient and reasonable compensation for any services so lost by attendance at school. One other point, and I have insisted on all the main essentials for a satisfactory arrangement of this necessary machinery as they at present occur to me. That point has reference to the certificates of attendance. To insure the usefulness of my scheme, or, indeed, of any similar scheme, a rigid system of attendance, and certificates of such attendance, must be insisted on. I would myself suggest a *yearly* book, to be supplied to every pupil, with the smallest possible daily requirements of entry on the part of the teacher, with, perhaps, an occasional space for a monthly or quarterly report of the progress made by the scholar. Such a book systematically kept would afford all necessary evidence as to the attendance at schools, and would at the same time give a sufficiently long retrospect to afford a clear view of the regularity and continuance of such attendance. Furthermore, and assuming for the moment your correspondent's suggestion of attendance at school as a condition of out-door relief afforded to the parents, these certificate books would furnish the clearest and most satisfactory evidence for the guardians to act on in administering relief. Under existing circumstances, as the experience of all acquainted with the poor will attest, the most difficult of all evidence to obtain is that which relates to school attendance. In some districts there might perhaps be found but small difficulty in obtaining volunteer *teachers* for such a system as I advocate, and such would be useful enough to put the machinery in motion; but for a permanence and proper carrying out of the plan, no doubt a paid staff would be essential.

A certificate of competence to teach reading and writing, with testimonials of character, granted by the National or Local Board of Education, would be the only necessary qualification for such teachers as I should propose to enrol; and I have small doubt that almost every clergyman could find in his parish persons able and willing, for no large remuneration, to undertake the office. With the frequent appeals to us on behalf of educated but unemployed women, there should be no dearth of suitable teachers amongst us. These teachers would of course be in immediate communication with the national or other large schools of the district; and all children having arrived at a certain degree of proficiency would be at once drafted out to such larger establishments. With respect to the first establishment and support of these "*street schools*," I would propose the levying of either a local or *national* rate, in very poor districts the *latter* could alone be applied, the application of such a rate being determined by report from the school inspector on the educational necessities of the district. This being a scheme to meet only the case of very poor districts, establishments would be inexpensive, and the salaries low. These questions of finance, however, must be determined by the Committee of Education, and varying with the wants of the places assisted, cannot properly be entered on here. This is the outline of my scheme; and I am disposed to think that it will only be by some such minute subdivision of educational labour that the real necessities of the ignorant poor in our large towns will be met and relieved.*

LETTER OF REV. H. MOULE.

THE EDUCATION OF PAUPER CHILDREN.†

(*Times*, November 21, 1868.)

SIR,—The statement in the *Times* of the 4th instant, of the cost of maintaining and educating pauper children in the Central London District Schools at Hanwell is in itself sufficiently startling. But it becomes doubly so when contrasted with what a body of 300 children might, if properly taught and directed, do for themselves.

About eleven years ago, I published a scheme for self-supporting boarding-schools for children of the industrial classes, and in 1861, I published an extension of this scheme to day-schools; and of both these publications I have received from several leading statesmen of the day, and from two or three of our bishops, expressions of approval. No valid objection has ever been urged against the scheme, and although none have come forward to test it by experiment, yet every year since its first publication has afforded me some additional confirmation of its soundness, its feasibility, and of the

* See also a valuable little pamphlet,—“Popular Education: What it is and what it is not,” by M. A. B. (Booth, London)—in support of this view.

† I have, without waiting to communicate with Mr. Moule, republished the letter. My interest in its subject and belief in its value must be my only justifications for the theft.—A. II. H.

vast amount of benefit which, from a general adoption of such a system, would accrue to all classes.

Pray allow me, then, to place before your readers, in contrast with the statement respecting the District Schools at Hanwell, the introduction of one of my papers, together with a general view of the mode by which I propose to render schools self-supporting.

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,

HENRY MOULE.

Fordington Vicarage, November 12.

“ SELF-SUPPORTING BOARDING-SCHOOLS.

“ An education for the working classes, which shall be truly and largely beneficial to them and to their country, ought to consist not merely in the imparting of a certain amount of instruction in secular or even religious subjects, but in a system of teaching and of training which shall be at once intellectual, religious, and industrial. Such a system cannot exist in our day-schools. Useful as they are, to a certain extent, and high as their standard of intellectual training occasionally rises, they altogether fall short of a system of education. For the very early removal of the children—a difficulty which no educational rate nor any scheme of compulsory attendance will ever obviate—renders even the intellectual training generally afforded very imperfect. At the same time, partly from the children being so small a portion of the day under the teacher’s influence, and so large a portion of it under counteracting influences, and partly from the want of opportunity, religious training and industrial training are altogether impracticable. In the boarding-schools which I propose there would be, on the contrary, full scope and opportunity for the most complete system of intellectual, religious, and industrial training, and, if adopted even to a very partial extent, these schools would hold, in relation to our primary schools, the same position of influence which our Universities hold in relation to public and private schools for the upper and middle classes. On the bare hope and probability of all this I venture to claim the most serious attention on behalf of my scheme for the institution and maintenance of such schools. I will first shew whence the funds for their maintenance are to be derived. These will necessarily be large. For, in order to induce the mechanic or labourer to part with his child, as the higher classes do, for the greater portion of the year—in order to induce him to give up his child’s earnings from 10 to 15 years, or from 12 to 17 years of age—you must first give him good ground to expect such an education as shall improve the child’s condition in life. This will involve the necessity of a highly-qualified, and therefore highly-paid, staff of masters. And in the next place you must lodge, feed, and clothe the child free of all expense to the parent. Now this, if looked for from the pecuniary aid of the richer classes in the way of gift, would be the absurdity of extravagance. But if, with no more aid from the rich man than a temporary loan, which shall be a fair investment, it can be brought about by the working classes themselves, or rather by the children themselves, then we

shall have in these schools a system which shall not only be worthy the name of education, but which for economy, shall be so vastly superior to any system hitherto devised, as to be independent both of charitable subscription and of Government grants. And this I assert can be effected. The well-directed labour of 100 boys bestowed on a sufficient extent of land suitable for the purpose shall, with God's blessing, raise an income sufficient to repay with interest the necessary capital to be borrowed, to pay rent, rates and taxes, to provide food, clothing, and a savings' fund for the children in the way of encouragement, and to furnish good salaries for the best masters, directors of work, and servants. Such an assertion will, doubtless, appear to many perfectly visionary; but both it, and what follows in support of it, rests upon facts and experiments, and on the opinions of men of the first intelligence and most practical knowledge. A healthy boy, only 10 years old, working 7 hours a day, with a steel fork, and on light soil, can dig an acre in 6 weeks. If so, then under proper direction he may cultivate 3 acres, digging them twice during the year. And a school of 100 boys, averaging from 10 to 17 years of age, and working in companies of 20 with a director over each company, may thus keep 300 acres, constantly under the fork or spade, and may produce, by wide and alternate cropping, and by the application of manure to the plant instead of to the ground, certainly two crops a year. From land thus under garden cultivation, a much larger produce may obviously be expected than from an ordinary farm; and £20 per acre per annum is the lowest estimate of gross produce which, provided there be a due supply of manure, has been allowed me by men of great experience; while some of them have set their estimate so much higher than this that I consider myself quite safe in reckoning the value of the gross produce of 300 acres, so cultivated, at £6,000 annually."

APPENDIX E.

EAST-END DISTRESS, AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISTRESSED.*

Letter to the *Standard*, January 16, 1868.

SIR,—Amongst the many methods of relief suggested in the present crisis for Eastern London, all such as combine employment with assistance, and making, as far as possible, such employment the condition of the assistance rendered, seem to be universally accounted the best. Up to the present time, however, a sort of supererogatory stone-breaking, exceptional mending of the local roads, and the speculative building of a ship at Millwall, would appear to be the only occupations suggested as likely to meet the necessities of the case. As a visitor of the poor for one of the most influential of the relief societies, and as one who in years past has seen much of East-end want and wretchedness, I may perhaps be allowed to offer in your columns one or two, as it seems to me,

* The Author believes the suggestions contained in the following letters likely to be equally available for the coming WINTER.

practical suggestions on this matter of pauper employment. In the first place I assume that the Metropolitan Board of Works has some sort of power and jurisdiction over the whole area now covered by this East-end distress, and in view of this assumption I would ask, are there no long-required but neglected local works which, with a wise and prompt liberality, the board might at once undertake? I, for one, as an almoner to my cost in some of the worst parts of Spitalfields and Whitechapel, can speak to a minor but most important point, in the necessity there exists for a better numbering of the eastern houses. In some streets which I could mention may be found house after house without number at all except, perhaps, that indicated by some almost unintelligible chalk mark (it may be ingeniously perverted by some district wag) whilst in others the unhappy traveller is bewildered and shuttlecocked from place to place by a duplicate, triple, or even quadruple representation of the number which he seeks. Surely, if there are any painters out of work—and I may reasonably assume there are—here is at once, to say the least, a few days' work, which would be only too readily accepted, and would not require the genius of very high-skilled labourers to accomplish. I have only quoted this seemingly small matter as an illustration of what requires to be done, but which, under existing circumstances, is not done in some of the eastern districts; and I feel certain that the already over-taxed postman, as well as the bewildered almoner would rejoice to see my suggestion carried out. Surely there are many other and more important improvements which a little local inquiry would speedily furnish. These once furnished, after proper investigation, I would suggest that a local deputation should wait on the First Commissioner of Works and ask assistance, either in the form of loan or otherwise, for carrying out the necessary improvements. By such means a large class of deserving, but now unemployed labourers would be temporarily relieved, and a whole important district of London permanently improved.

One more word and I have done. Your special reporter in the last of his articles on East-end distress (published in yesterday's journal) mentions the fact of numerous houses in the district visited as being now empty and deserted. Surely in such a crisis as this there is a favourable opportunity for the Peabody trustees to step in and purchase. As I have had occasion to write elsewhere on more than one occasion, *repair* and *reconstruction* will do more for improving the condition of our London poor and their habitations than all the new model dwelling-houses which the most philanthropic architect could devise. So long as the old tenements are allowed to stand I maintain the radical amelioration of the poorer lodging-houses must be indefinitely postponed. Even in this proposed reparation of untenanted and, no doubt, not too tenantable houses alluded to above, there seems a prospect of good and profitable employment for a large and deserving class of our distressed population.*

* Since writing the above, I am happy to find that Mr. Torrens' Act is already put in force with good effect in some parts of Poplar. See daily papers, *passim*.

THE WORKHOUSE STONEYARDS AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE
DESTITUTE POOR.Author's Letter in *Morning Star*, January 23, 1868.

SIR,—Will you allow me a few words of commendation and comment on Mr. Greenwood's "Round of the Stoneyards," which appeared in your journal yesterday? The whole question, as opened out by your correspondent's most graphic article, is one, as I think, of the deepest importance, and involves larger issues than even his pertinent remarks would seem to imply. In the first place, I would ask whether the whole question of out-door relief, as administered in the stoneyards by the London Boards of Guardians, does not urgently demand investigation and revision? Secondly, I would inquire whether some steps cannot be taken, even under existing circumstances, to alleviate, if not altogether abolish, the evils that are now so properly complained of. On the first head, from very recent inquiry and experience, I can confirm all that Mr. Greenwood has reported on the present system of relieving through employment in the workhouse stoneyards. I may state, then, that at a large West-end union a few days since I found on admission to the stoneyard (to which, I must frankly acknowledge, I was courteously and instantly admitted by the authorities) about 100 men, many of them belonging distinctly to the class of "casual labourers" and probably never at the best of times in a very well-to-do condition, but others obviously of a superior grade, engaged in the two occupations of stone-breaking and wood-chopping. For this labour, extending from eight in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon, the utmost wage, I was informed, is 6d. for a married man, and 4d. for a single one per diem, with a proportionate amount of bread according to the number in family of the labourer. Setting aside for the moment the scantiness of the remuneration, I think there is fair ground for complaint in the fact of these two occupations being afforded indiscriminately to all applicants for relief, whether such applicants be artizans or labourers. An additional hardship, however, has to be mentioned here. The labourer having finished his allotted task, in the case of stone-breaking the amount required being eight bushels, is not permitted to receive his wage and spend the remainder of his day, either in additional earnings from the same source, or in what would in all ways be a more profitable enterprise—a search for employment elsewhere. Under almost all circumstances he is compelled to linger out his day idle and discontented. Both these grievances have been touched on by your correspondent in his own pathetic manner, but it appears to me that they require to be again emphatically enforced, from a purely political-economical standpoint, on all thinkers who are anxious to ameliorate the present working of our Poor Law system. The hardship which such tests as those now employed in stoneyards imposed upon skilled mechanics I need hardly pause to remark on; but I may add that the labour master at the union I allude to informed me that there

were at least ten or twelve superior artizans weekly engaged in the stoneyard, and to whom the task imposed was frequently so irksome and unwonted as to be almost impossible of accomplishment. I have assumed that the larger number of persons engaged in the stoneyard, from their habits and antecedents, have probably no especial claim on our sympathies; and indeed many of these incompetents and incorrigibles, for such they are, are earning their wages, as I am informed, for little or no work, and are spending those wages when so taken in the worst of ways. Nevertheless, admitting this fact, there still remains a large residuum of distressed but deserving artizans, for whom no proper provision, or even opportunity for making provision for themselves, is, under existing circumstances, afforded at all.

How to meet this difficulty, and furnish some machinery for restoring these distressed artizans to employment and independence, is the second question to which I desire now to direct your attention. It appears to me, then, that awaiting the permanent co-operation, if not incorporation, of our existing charitable machinery with that of the Poor Law, some arrangement might surely be made by means of which our great relief societies, such as the Metropolitan and that for the Relief of Distress, with its active staff of 100 or more almoners, might so put themselves in communication with the parish authorities as to receive from them weekly a list of the superior artizans now engaged in the stoneyards, with a view to affording them that supplemental assistance in the direction of obtaining employment or the purchase of tools as pointed out by your correspondent, which, under existing regulations, the guardians themselves would neither be ready to volunteer, nor, perhaps, justified in giving. By such an arrangement as I suggest, a large number of these men might at a comparatively small cost be temporarily supported (without, I maintain, relinquishing their proper allowance from the Poor Law both of work and wage), and finally re-established in their respective trades and occupations.

One further method that appears to me to offer advantages in a similar, and, perhaps, even more suitable way, would be by an arrangement being effected between the several boards of guardians and the various labour registration societies, which seem now to be steadily advancing in importance and usefulness. By a small subscription to such societies the guardians could, I presume, be supplied—and I here speak with the authority of a gentleman closely connected with the leading of these societies—with a list of the registered vacancies in the various trades to which such distressed artizans might belong, and by such organization the guardians supplying the labourers wanted, the due relations of supply and demand would be effectually maintained.* By such a scheme, if carefully carried out, the rates would be economised, the

* In some stoneyards the practice of reading aloud the daily papers to enable the workers to see the available openings for employment has been introduced, and deserves every extension, if properly guarded from abuse.

labourer rendered independent, the employer supplied with the required labour, and the anomalies of the stoneyard in some degree diminished, if not altogether removed. How far Poor Law regulations would at present sanction such an expenditure, small as it is, as suggested above, by the guardians, I do not dare to say, but I cannot but think the advantages once clearly recognised, the sanction of the authorities could not be long delayed. On all grounds—social and economical—such an expenditure would be clearly to the benefit of all concerned. As the stoneyard exists now, the very object of a labour test is in a great measure defeated, and the labourer once confined within the workhouse bounds is shut off in many cases altogether from that market without to which every effort should be strained to restore him.

APPENDIX F.

DRUNKENNESS AND DISTRESS AMONGST OUR POOR.

Times, January 15, 1868.

SIR,—For some years past there has been much destitution among the London poor during the winter months. No matter whether the prices of provisions are high or low, or whether the weather is unusually severe or not, this destitution is sure to crop up on the return of winter. As you have generously allowed the *Times* to become a channel for its relief, will you permit me to call the attention of your readers to that which lies at the root of the evil*—the drinking habits of the poor? During nine months of the year the majority of artizans and other labourers who are now on the verge of starvation earn from a guinea to 40s. a week, and a portion of this might without inconvenience be laid by for the pinch which they all know full well must come with winter's frost; but, as they earn it, it generally finds its way to the gin palace or the beer-shop. This is the reason why many thousands of them are now penniless; and this improvidence is not confined to London and the great towns, it is common all over the land. Here, alas! in this quiet country parish it prevails just the same as it does in London. If the labourer merely drank a glass or two of beer with his meals, I, for one, should not find fault with him; but he is not satisfied with this, he walks off from his family to the public-house, pays 100 per cent. more for his beer than he has any need to pay for it, and, what is far worse, becomes a tippler and drinks to excess.† Here, then, is the chief cause of the existing destitution. And this excessive drinking has been increasing for many years past. In the year 1863 the number of cases of "drunkenness and drunk and

* My own experience in many instances, though myself no teetotaller, too painfully confirms Mr. Adams' views.—A. H. H.

† How this might be met by institution of reading rooms and clubs has been pointed out elsewhere in this paper. See also many valuable publications of Working Men's Club and Institute Union, 150, Strand, W.C.

disorderly" reported in the "judicial statistics" for England and Wales was 94,745, and in 1866, 104,368, shewing an increase of more than 10 per cent. in four years. Relatively to the population the number of such cases in 1863 was one in every 216, and in 1866, one in every 203 persons. Again, the number of beershops in England, for consumption on the premises, exclusive of licensed victuallers, was, in 1863, 38,547, and in 1865 (I have no later returns before me), 42,660, being in the former year one for every 527 persons, and in the latter, one for every 492. It would be easy to shew that this prevalent intemperance is the parent of most of the crimes of the poor as well as their poverty. Argument is needless on this point, because it is generally admitted. During the last year seven at least of the judges have called attention to the connection between crime and intemperance. The following are examples of their opinions on the subject:—

"More than one-half—nay, fully three-fourths—of the cases that have been brought before me have had their origin directly or indirectly in drunkenness." Such was the testimony of Mr. Justice Mellor at the Durham Assizes. "Drunkenness again," said Mr. Justice Lush at the Manchester Assizes—"It is the case with almost every one that is brought before me." And Mr. Baron Martin at the Liverpool Assizes expressed his belief that drunkenness seemed to be the cause of nine-tenths of the crime which was committed. What remedies, then, can be provided for the mitigation of this widespread evil? The first and most important is the repeal of the Beer Act of 1830. That pernicious measure, by removing the granting of licences from the magistrate to the exciseman, and by imposing no practical restriction on the multiplication of beershops, has, in the opinion of the whole nation, tended to aggravate intemperance among the poor. Over and over again it has been condemned by Parliamentary Committees, and there is, I believe, no class of the community, except that which is interested in its maintenance, which does not regard it as a curse to the country. Attempts have been made from time to time to amend it since the year 1834, when a Committee of the House of Commons first reported against it. In the year 1847, Mr. G. Hardy introduced a measure for its repeal, and would probably have carried it but for the opposition of Lord Palmerston's Government, and their promise to bring in a Bill themselves to put an end to the evils of the beershop system. In 1850 a Committee of the House of Lords condemned it, and again, in 1854, a Committee of the House of Commons reported—"The beershop system has proved a failure;" but nothing effective has yet been done,—no legislative remedy has been provided for the mischief of a system which the Legislature has denounced for more than a quarter of a century.

How long shall this incentive to intemperance be allowed to victimize the poor? Let it be tolerated by our statesmen for a short time longer, and such a remedy as they would now think inexpedient will be insisted on. The bondage of the beershops will become so hateful that nothing less than a Permissive Bill or the complete

extinction of the traffic in liquor, will satisfy the people's Parliament. At all events let our statesmen remember that until a legislative remedy for intemperance is applied all moral agencies will be unable to repress it. We who labour night and day for the welfare of the poor cannot deliver them from the power of the beershops. The enormous influence for evil which they wield makes them invulnerable to all the weapons which we can bring to bear against them. We see them undoing our work, destroying the souls and bodies of our poorer brethren, and filling their cottages with vice and misery, but we are powerless to stay the plague ; and so it will continue until there shall be such a change in the existing beer laws as will dry up those poisonous springs of intemperance.

I am, Sir

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS,
Incumbent of Stockeross, Berks.

FINIS.

